BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

BING MAGAZINE (INCORPORATING BINGANG)

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

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BING magazine:	http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:	www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

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Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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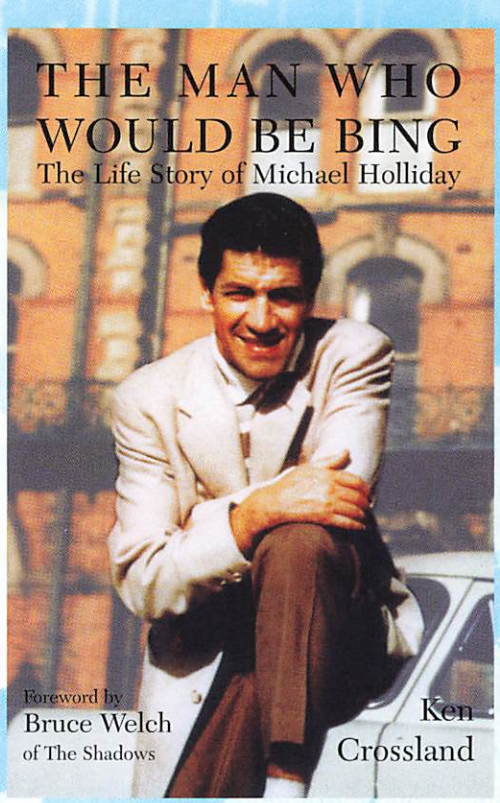
The Man Who Would Be Bing

The Life Story of Michael Holliday

by **Ken Crossland**

Foreword by
Bruce Welch of The Shadows

Tragic reality behind the myth of Fifties legend
'Britain's Bing Crosby'



Norman Milne was a Liverpool sailor who, reborn as Michael Holliday, became one of the era's biggest stars. For the first time, this book recounts the rags-to-riches story of his rise to the top, and the tragic inner turmoil that led him to suicide.

Holliday was a household name in the Fifties and enjoyed a string of hits, including the chart topping "*The Story of my Life*" and "*Starry Eyed*". It was a brief stay in the spotlight however - his voice made his fortune, but all the accolades became a millstone around his neck. Holliday's stardom lasted only eight turbulent years - in October 1963 he decided he couldn't take any more. His marriage in tatters, his taxes unpaid, he had convinced himself this was the end. "*Drugs Kill TV's Michael Holliday*", screamed the newspaper headlines the next day.

Tying in with the release on CD 'Michael Holliday - The Story Of My Life - The Michael Holliday Anthology' EMI

Ken Crossland has a passion for the great popular singers of the twentieth century. He writes regularly for "Bing", the magazine of the International Crosby Circle, and was its editor from 1990-1992. He is a regular contributor to BBC Radio Shropshire's "Record Collectors" and has written and presented programmes for Radio Merseyside and Saga FM. He was an advisor to BBC Radio 2 on its 1993 Michael Holliday feature, and took part in their 100th Anniversary tribute to Bing Crosby in May 2003.

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EDITORIAL

The merger of Club Crosby and the International Crosby Circle is a success! The first issue of the new BING had a splendid blend of articles from both sides of the Atlantic, and the I.C.C.'s usual beautiful full-color covers and sparkling typography would be difficult to improve upon. My thanks go to Malcolm, Ken, and Michael in the UK for their help in getting all of this to happen so easily. Special thanks also go to my friend Wig here in the USA, who helped keep me "on the track" through the whole process of getting mailing addresses straightened out and ready for the initial mailing, writing letters to the non-dual members, etc. etc.

Recently I had an e-mail message from Stephanie Plowman, who takes loving care of the Crosby Collection at Gonzaga University. Their collection of BINGANG issues before 1950 is scattered and incomplete. She is looking for photocopies (or originals!) from 1936 to 1949 to fill out the collection. If you can help in any way, please contact her at Gonzaga: e-mail, plowman@gonzaga.edu; telephone, (509) 323-3847; mailing address, Stephanie E. Plowman, Special Collections Librarian, Foley Center Library, Gonzaga University - AD Box 95, Spokane, WA 99258. She will appreciate your help, as will all our "Crosby people."

I have been busy indexing and filing the archives of the old Club Crosby, also compiling a subject listing of the articles that appeared in BINGANG over the past 24 years (the extent of my collection of the journal). I am very impressed not only at the enormity of Bing's accomplishments, but by the coverage he received by the media, and most of all by the dedication of his fans in preserving his memorabilia. There was only one Bing, and there will never be another one like him. Let's continue to do all we can to keep his name before the public and his remarkable talents available to all.

As before, I urge you to let us know what you would like to see in the journal (and thanks to those who have already contacted us!). Turn on your computer or drag out the old typewriter or pick up the telephone and contact us. Your comments are always welcome!

My best to all,

Wayne L. Martin

I can only echo Wayne's comments and it is very pleasing to see that so many Club Crosby members have chosen to remain with the expanded club.

It is with great sadness that, in this issue, we have to cover the death of **Phillip Crosby**. Phil died in January at the age of 69 and with him goes the last main link with Bing's first family. We send our sincere condolences to Phillip's family. Priscilla Koernig has penned a very nice tribute which will be found later in this issue. The photo on this page shows Bing with Phillip at Paramount Studios.

Many media enterprises have recorded Bing's date of birth as May 2, 1904 and it is our fervent hope that they will look to celebrate his centenary in May. Don't let's discourage them by telling them that they've missed

it! If they want to commemorate it, we must help them as much as we can. The BBC in the UK are preparing a documentary called 'Kings of Cool' which will look at crooners in general and will start with Bing. This is expected to be transmitted in May and the ICC is actively helping them.

We briefly mentioned the imminent Bing and Clay Aiken duet in our last issue and on a following page Greg Van Beek tells us what actually happened and supplies the background detail behind the event. Also on the TV scene, the *Larry King Live* programme shown on CNN on Christmas Day and featuring Bing's second family was very interesting, containing as it did suggestions that more will be done in future to further Bing's image. Bert Bishop has a full review in his *Bing On The Box* article. Wig tells us of developments involving Hofstra, Ken Crossland has news of some very welcome CDs and Lionel Pairpoint is back with an update on the elusive Woodbury shows. As he has done in our pages for the last 15 years, Keith Parkinson looks at Bing on celluloid and continues his popular A-Z of Bing's movie career.

Both our front and back covers have been generously provided by Jon Oye this time. The front cover shows Bing and Peggy Lee on the set of *Mr. Music* in 1950 and hopefully this photo will be new to most of you.

Sadly there was virtually no interest in a club gathering in Dublin, Ireland around the weekend of May 29/30 and anything that does take place will just be a few friends having a pleasant get-together because of their love for Bing.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Gord presents Bing with a boxed set of 'The Crosby Years' in 1975.

Our award-winning chronological radio series was released in 1975 and was broadcast around the world. For the centennial of his birth it has been updated and enhanced on 14 digital CDs that run between 60 and 74 minutes each. All 14 will remain available, but only for a limited time. If you have not heard any of these CDs, I would suggest as an introduction to the series, that you consider ordering "The Prologue" and "Epilogue" for an overview of the entire collection. If you are interested in back orders refer to the 2002-2003 issues of BING for a listing of the content of each program or write to Anderson Publishing at the address listed below.

My sincere thanks to my ICC friends and collectors who have written glowing endorsements of the series. One member summated the thoughts of fellow Crosby fans when he wrote: "A wonderful insight - the definitive Crosby series."

And finally, my most sincere thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane, whose support and encouragement has been invaluable.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs from "The Crosby Years", Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811]. Payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. The secure e-mail address for orders is admin@anderpub.com . The cost is $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one CD. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks to Anderson Publishing.

Sales in the USA & Canada have, surprisingly, continued to be lower than those in the UK and I fear that members are still confusing the series with similar programmes put out by John Salisbury through station KXL of Portland. Please note that they were completely different productions.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £15.99 for two, £8.99 for one.)

Gary Giddins

As many of you know, Gary Giddins, apart from writing several books, has been a columnist with the *Village Voice* newspaper in New York for over 30 years. In December, he made the momentous decision to leave the *Voice* to focus on his books and we are sure that all members of the ICC will wish him every success in his new endeavours.

Gary will hopefully now be able to work on the much awaited second volume of his Bing biography. As we went to press, we noted that Gary and Stephanie Plowman (from Gonzaga) were scheduled to make presentations on Bing at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival being held on February 27 at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho.

Too much Bing for the neighbours

There was nation-wide coverage in the UK at the end of January about a Crosby fan who made life hell for his neighbour by playing Bing's records at full blast night and day leading him to be evicted from his flat.

Newspaper reports stated that John Boden, 58, made so much noise he left grandmother Edna Jenson on the "edge of a nervous breakdown". But it was his obsession with the Bing 'n' Bowie hit 'Little Drummer Boy' which proved the final straw. Edna, 75, who lives below Mr Boden's one-bedroom riverside apartment, said: "The music was always loud but the Bing Crosby records were the worst. It was inhuman blasting out 'Little Drummer Boy' at all hours." Edna claimed Mr Boden met her complaints with a stream of abuse. She began to lose her hair due to stress and was prescribed sleeping tablets to help her get through the seemingly endless nights.

After a string of complaints over three years, Mr Boden was placed under a county court restraining order in June. But after breaching that, a judge at Liverpool county court has given him two months to leave the Housing Association flat in Wallasey, Merseyside.

Mr. Boden is, we are relieved to say, not one of our members. Your Editor was contacted by a BBC local radio station in the south of England about the matter and I was briefly interviewed on air over the telephone. I did at least manage to plug our club as the oldest fan club in the world. They say that there is no such thing as bad publicity and perhaps that's right on this occasion.

Malcolm Macfarlane

WIG'S WORDS

Wig Wiggins from Arlington, Virginia takes up his pen.

HOFSTRA CONFERENCE PAPERS

Hofstra University is proceeding with plans to publish selected papers that were presented at its conference on "BING! CROSBY AND AMERICAN CULTURE" held in November 2002. I have been asked by Dr. Ruth Prigozy, director of the conference, to provide a short history of the two Bing Crosby fan clubs that were official Hofstra participants for inclusion in this volume. Here is a slightly edited version of my contribution, which I thought readers of this issue of BING might like to see.

THE BING CROSBY FAN CLUBS

Bing Crosby was born in Tacoma, Washington on May 3, 1903, and died in Madrid, Spain on October 14, 1977. During the quarter century that has passed since his death, fan clubs have played an active role in helping to preserve Bing's incomparable musical legacy for the continued enjoyment of the general public throughout the world. Without their efforts, it is unlikely that Bing's films and recordings would have remained as well known as they are today.

Various Bing Crosby fan clubs have come and gone over the years, but two major organizations—one in the United States and one in Great Britain—have been at the forefront of endeavors to keep Bing's memory alive during a period of dramatic changes in popular musical tastes and a sharp decline in the attention paid by the media to the vocalists of the first half of the 20th century, Bing included.

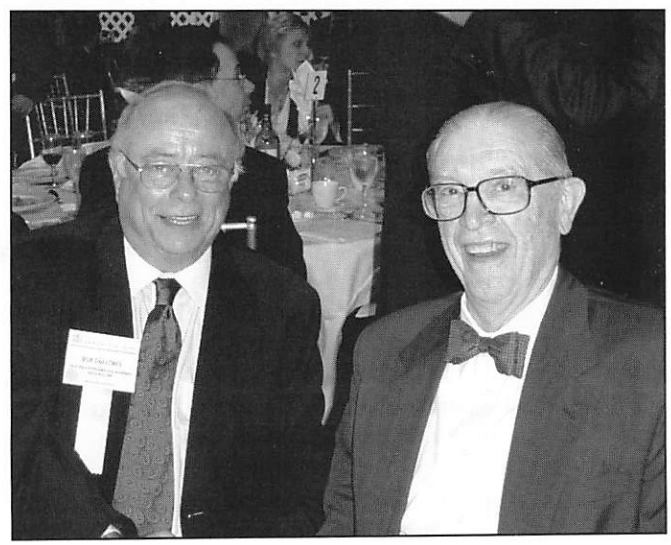
Somewhat surprisingly, while Bing Crosby's once dominant position as a leading star on radio, in films and on records has faded considerably since 1977 (except, of course, for the annual rediscovery of his talents during each Christmas holiday season) the activities and membership rolls of his two leading fan clubs have continued to grow to the point that they probably are more influential today than they were during Bing's lifetime.

The first official Bing Crosby fan club was organized in the United States in 1936, some five years after he leapt to nationwide stardom via his radio programs on the Columbia Broadcasting System, his early series of musical films for Paramount Pictures and his best-selling recordings for the Brunswick, and later Decca, record labels.

Named the CLUB CROSBY, this American organization has for 67 years published a newsletter (later a semi-annual magazine) called "BINGANG" and has attracted members from many different countries. Today the CLUB CROSBY is recognized by the GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS as the oldest continuously-active fan club in the world.

The foremost overseas fan club began in Great Britain in 1950 as the British Bing Club, later to become the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, which also has members in many countries around the globe. It publishes a quarterly magazine called BING and sponsors books on major aspects of his life and career, including recent histories of his radio and television programs.

Both the CLUB CROSBY and the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE have attracted a growing membership in recent years, and significant numbers of these new participants are younger enthusiasts in their twenties, thirties and forties—as well as even a few teenagers—thus disproving the belief that remaining Crosby fans must be only oldsters who grew up with Bing more than a half century ago. As a member of both of these Crosby organizations for more than 30 years myself, I was extremely pleased when I learned that Hofstra University was organizing an unprecedented academic conference on Bing's influence on American (and international) popular culture that would take place in November 2002, just after the 25th anniversary of his death, and six months prior to celebrations of the centennial of his birth in May 2003. I was even more pleased to be asked to become a member of the planning committee for the conference, and to be able to advise Hofstra on themes and participants for the various events it would encompass. It was an honor to represent the Bing Crosby fan clubs in this manner.



Wig (right) with Bob DeFlores at Hofstra

Many club members came from all over the world to attend the Hofstra conference itself, and they enthusiastically agreed that it was an unprecedented opportunity to spark increased interest in and awareness of Bing Crosby's leading role in defining American popular entertainment throughout his remarkable 50-year career. This collection of papers from the conference is a testament to that conclusion.

Beginning January 1, 2004, these two American and British fan clubs have merged, under the combined name of the INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY, in order to strengthen their ongoing efforts to further honor Bing

Crosby as the pre-eminent popular entertainer of the 20th century. BING magazine, which is professionally printed and illustrated, will continue to be issued quarterly to some 1,250 worldwide members of the combined club, which also will be pursuing other activities to enhance Bing's memory in future years.

If any reader of this volume of papers from the Hofstra conference is not already a Bing Crosby club member and would be interested in supporting our efforts, we would welcome hearing from you.

BING'S MAN IN CINCINNATI

As has been discussed in the pages of BING over the years, the number of American radio stations broadcasting recordings by Bing and his fellow singers and big band leaders from the 1930s, '40s and '50s continues to decline significantly throughout the country. More and more of the former "good music" stations have switched either to the computerized "top 40 hits of the day" or (even worse, in my opinion) to what is known as "talk radio". In this process, most radio stations have turned their backs on any popular music that pre-dates the rock and roll era. They no longer have any interest in the so-called "easy-listening" audience.

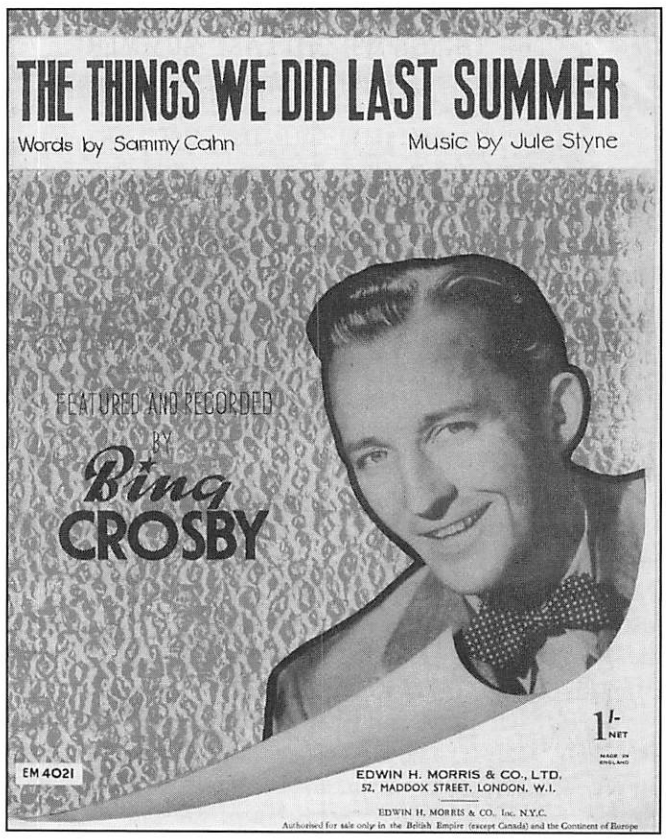
Nevertheless, there are still a few stalwart exponents of classic popular music busy out there in radioland, and happily some of them are members of that informal group we count on as "Bing Broadcasters." One of the most active these days is a fellow ICC member, **Mark Magistrelli**, who for the past several years has been featuring a regular twice-weekly full hour of Bing's recordings in the Cincinnati, Ohio area of the Middle West.

Mark Magistrelli is well-known for his radio and television work in Cincinnati, and he has received numerous awards for his efforts to preserve and keep alive the popular music of the golden age of radio. Mark's more recent efforts have included a twice-weekly program entitled "Bing Crosby and Friends", which airs every Monday and Wednesday afternoon over station WMKV-FM at 89.3 in Cincinnati (and over the Internet at http://www.wmkvfm.org/index.html), and a separate old time radio show called "The Big Broadcast" on Cincinnati station WVXU-FM at 91.7 and its 7-station XStar network that covers the states of Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Indiana (listen online at http://www.xstarnet.com/). This latter program features the histories of famous radio shows and the personalities that starred in them. Quite naturally, Mark manages to include quite a few of Bing's Philco radio programs in this series.

I am most grateful to Mark Magistrelli for sending me CD copies of a number of his broadcasts so that I could review their makeup and content for BING readers. I have decided to restrict my comments to the first broadcast in his Crosby series because of space limitations, but I think this will suffice to give everyone a good idea of the high quality programs that Mark produces for the Cincinnati area radio audience and for those on the Internet.

As an opening and closing theme for "Bing Crosby and Friends", Mark uses an orchestral arrangement of "Aren't You Glad You're You" by the Sauter-Finegan big band, a popular RCA Victor studio group from the 1950s. It is a pleasant variation on Bing's familiar recording of the song from "THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S".

For this first program, Mark followed with three uninterrupted recordings by Bing from the 1940s: "Swinging On A Star" (I guess that was inevitable), "The Things We Did Last Summer" (with Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra), and "South America, Take It Away" (with the Andrews Sisters). After playing these three recordings, Mark provided appropriate information about each one and the performers who accompanied Bing, in a relaxed manner quite unlike so many loud, hyped-up presenters who seem to dominate the airwaves today.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Following this, Mark turned to the LP album "Fancy Meeting You Here" that Bing recorded with Rosemary Clooney for RCA in 1958. Calling it "the finest vocal duet album of the 1950s", Mark played three of the tracks they made with Billy May's orchestra: the title song, "I Can't Get Started With You" and "You Came A Long Way From St. Louis". His subsequent comments made it quite clear that he definitely appreciates the Crosby/Clooney combination.

After a brief commercial break halfway through the hour-long program, Mark presented three of Bing's well-known, but seldom-heard recordings from the Blue Decca years of the late 1930s: the swinging "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby" with brother Bob's band "A Blues Serenade" accompanied by Joe Venuti's orchestra and "Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider", with John Scott Trotter and The Foursome vocal group. Again, Mark included brief but informative descriptions of each of the three recordings, before turning to a different aspect of the program. He next played three tracks from a compact disc made for Concord Records by Rosemary Clooney entitled "Sentimental Journey". Praising her

relaxed stylings of classic popular songs included in the album, Mark chose "That Old Black Magic", "I'll Be Around" and "Happiness Is Just A Thing called Joe" for this part of his broadcast, which provided a nice complement to her earlier "Fancy Meeting You Here" duets with Bing.

To close the program, Mark moved to the first half-dozen tracks from Bing's 1954 "Musical Autobiography" LP album with the Buddy Cole Trio, including Bing's spoken introductions to each of the songs. While saying he valued the Autobiography set highly, Mark added he had not played it himself for years and thought his listeners would enjoy hearing Bing discuss his early career and hit songs from that period. Mark then played the part of the album that includes "Muddy Water", "Mississippi Mud", "My Kinda Love", "I Surrender, Dear", "It Must Be True", "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" and Bing's first number one hit for Brunswick, "Out Of Nowhere". This was followed by the Sauter-Finegan version of his closing theme.

Overall, this was a carefully-constructed and imaginative hour of recordings by Bing and other artists that made for excellent listening, with Mark's relaxed and informal comments throughout the program adding a great deal to its appeal. Mark Magistrelli is not only a highly-knowledgeable proponent of the popular music from Bing's era as an entertainer, but also an enthusiastic supporter of the ICC's efforts to keep Bing's legacy alive and well among the Cincinnati area's radio audience. I have received a number of favorable comments about Mark's programs from other ICC members who are fortunate enough to enjoy his broadcasts on a regular basis, and I would like to add my personal thanks to him for all that he is doing on Bing's behalf in this day and age. I could only wish that all ICC members around the world would have the chance to listen to such excellent radio programs themselves. Those on the Internet have that opportunity and I commend the program to them.

CLOSING COMMENTS

As we now have many other American contributors to BING following the amalgamation of our two clubs, I will close for this time around and save other subjects for the Summer issue later this year. With best regards to everyone.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
February 15, 2004

PHILLIP CROSBY 1934 - 2004

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Phil Crosby at his home in Woodland Hills, California on January 13. He was 69. The last surviving son of Bing and Dixie Lee, Phil was born on July 13, 1934 at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, Los Angeles. He was a twin and he and his brother Dennis were premature and weighed between 4 and five pounds each. Phil was christened Phillip Lang Crosby, the 'Lang' name being dedicated to Eddie Lang, who had tragically died the year before.

As children of a famous entertainer, Phil and his three brothers (Gary, Dennis and Lindsay) were often in the public eye making occasional appearances in films, newsreels and on radio. Phil was educated at Bellarmine College, a Jesuit secondary school in San Jose, and after graduating he and his twin brother enrolled at Washington State College in Pullman to study animal husbandry. He had worked on his father's ranch at Elko, Nevada during summer vacations and this had given him a lifelong love of animals.

A young Phil with his dogs.

Army service followed and Phil used to tell the story about how he found himself working as a medical orderly at various pleasant Army camps stateside while his twin brother, Dennis, had been posted to Germany and was not enjoying the experience. Dennis told Phil that twins could usually ask to be stationed together and he asked Phil to see what could be done to get him back to the USA. Both brothers contacted their commanding officers with the unexpected result that Phil finished up in Germany as well!

After Army service, the four Crosby Brothers decided to go into show-business as a vocal act in 1959 and while their father's name undoubtedly helped them get started, they soon revealed very real talent and were a most attractive act. The eldest brother, Gary, split from the act after six months but the remaining brothers continued very successfully until 1962 when the ill-health of Lindsay and a change in musical fashions caused them to break-up.

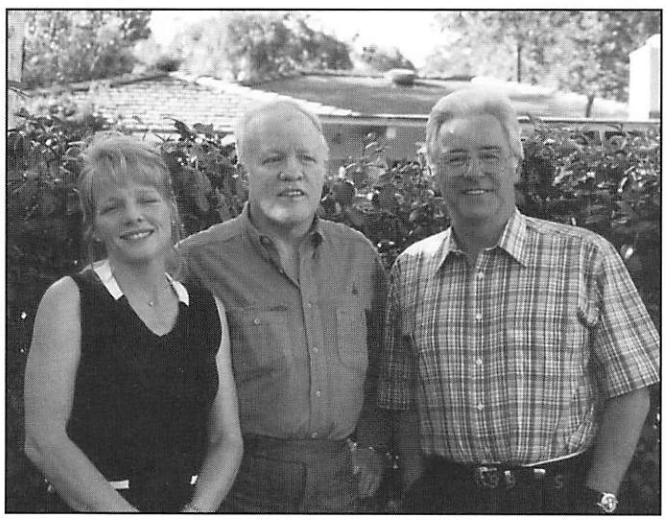
Phil developed a solo act and enjoyed some success appearing on national TV shows with Bob Hope and with his father. He also appeared in films such as "Sergeants Three", "None But the Brave" and "Robin and the Seven Hoods" with Frank Sinatra and the clan. Phil went to Vietnam with Bob Hope on a couple of occasions and later returned to entertain there. He felt that these were some of the most rewarding experiences

of his show-business life.

An opportunity then arose for Phil to take an interest in a night club in Atlanta, Georgia where he performed nightly for some years. Ill health had handicapped him in recent years but he had continued his keen interest in sports and animals. He also bought back his father's former home at Hayden Lake, Idaho from a third party.

As we know only too well, his brother, Gary, had written a book implying that Bing had been cruel and uncaring. Phil had always dissociated himself from these comments stating that Bing "was a fantastic father" and "I have nothing but fond memories of dad, going to studios with him, family vacations at our cabin in Idaho, boating and fishing with him."

Your Editor had the great pleasure of dining with Phil and his daughter Dixie in May, 1999 and I took an immediate liking to him. Amiable and friendly, we were soon conversing like old pals. We discussed Gary Crosby's book and Phil repeated what he had always maintained, that it was a tissue of lies and exaggeration put together with the help of a ghost writer to make money.



Phil's daughter Dixie Lee with Phil (centre) and Malcolm Macfarlane in 1999

As regards discipline, Phil said that Bing never lied to them and always spelt out the rules of engagement to them. It was then up to them whether they conformed or not and as we know, Gary had great difficulty in observing these requirements. Usually any punishment involved withdrawal of privileges and Phil could remember only occasional corporal punishment from Bing, giving the impression that his mother was far more strict. He recalled the time when the three oldest lads had taken Dixie's much-loved canary out of its cage and Phil played with it and then found that its head was 'loose'. When Bing and Dixie returned, the boys were indeed punished appropriately for killing the prized bird.

I told Phil at our first meeting that it needed him to say quite publicly that Bing was a good father so that the false propaganda from Gary Crosby's book could be countered. Phil duly contacted the Globe newspaper and gave an interview to them which produced a nice article headed "The Real Bing Crosby - by the son who loved him." I had several telephone chats with Phil following our meeting and I always found him friendly, helpful and amusing.

Phil was honoured with a funeral Mass on Monday evening, 19 January, at 7pm PST at Good Shepherd Church at 505 N Bedford Dr in Beverly Hills, CA and his burial was the next morning at Holy Cross Cemetery. His friend, Chuck Morrell, reported that there was a nice service for Phil. Chuck continued:

> *"The Father conducting it had gone to high school with Phil and Dennis. The church was almost full and Harland Svare (Ex coach of the LA RAMS football team) gave a talk as did the husband of Phil's first wife Sandy. All Phil's children were there and also Kathryn Grant and Mary Frances Crosby. After the service there was a reception in another part of the Church. At that time I played the tape of songs by Phil that Martin McQuade had sent me last year. It was very well received. One of the songs was one that I had written for Phil. On the back side of that song Phil sang "Thanks" and Bing ad-libbed in about ten times. It seemed to fit this time and place very well. It seems the church was the same one that Bing and Dixie were married in and also where Phil had his first communion."*

Phil was married five times and has four surviving children and six grandchildren. We have been in touch with his daughters, Dixie Lee and Mary in recent weeks and have expressed our sincere condolences to them.

So we come to an end of an era as the last surviving son of Bing and Dixie is lost to us. Someone who knew Phil far better than me was Priscilla Koernig so let's hand over to her.

Malcolm Macfarlane

My friend, Phil Crosby

by Priscilla J. Koernig

One of the last times that I received a phone call from Phil (May 14, 2003) he left a message for me as I was on my way to Spokane, WA. for the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Bing's birth. I'm going to quote a few highlights from that message.

Phil, laughing, and then says "Priscilla, that's a great outgoing message. By gosh—start's off with the old man singing (and Phil sings) God Bless America, and the closing by the dog. I was trying to figure out—yes, it has to be a recording—although you never know—dogs are pretty smart after watching *The Animal Planet*. I love the old man but I think the dog wins it on this one." (For those of you who haven't heard my answer machine, the message starts out with Bing singing the first line of 'God Bless America', then my voice asking people to leave a message, and ending with my little dog barking). "The reason I called is—you know Dad's thing up there in Gonzaga—I can't go because I'm still feeling pretty bad and look even worse."

Phil wanted to let me know that his son, Flip and daughter, Mary would be going to Spokane and wanted me to contact her by phone when we arrived there. He wanted me to see the Hayden Lake home. Fortunately, I was in contact daily with my friend who was staying at my home taking care of my dog, Katie. I received Phil's message and I wanted to share this to not only show how thoughtful Phil was, but to quote the part about his Dad.

After listening again to the message just now, I

wonder if he was starting to not feel well then.

Anyway, Mary E. Crosby, Phil's daughter, was extremely thoughtful to let me know of her Dad's passing instead of my finding out about it in the news. Phil and I had kept in touch at least once or twice a year either by writing or by phone since March, 1961.

The Crosby Brothers (Phil, Dennis and Lindsay) appeared in a three week engagement at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco in March of 1961. Friends and I went to see them various times. In fact we liked them so much that we started a fan club for them. The journal was called "The Three Chips" (off the old block) and their Dad was a proud honorary member. I have a letter from Bing accepting being an honorary member and stating how proud he was of them.

Phil always seemed to be the leader of the group. I, personally, thought he had an outgoing personality, where Dennis and Lindsay were shy, and that Phil had the best voice. In July of 1961, we flew to Las Vegas to see the Crosby Bros. at the Desert Inn Hotel. Phil made sure that they paid for our dinners. He also got us in to see a few other shows and also invited us to go to the Tony Bennett 2am show with them and their wives. Needless to say, we had a marvelous time.

Phil with Priscilla in 1965 at the Hyatt Music Theatre Lounge, Burlingame, California

In looking thru our club's journals, I found a biography on Phil that I'd like to share:-

> Cotton-topped Phillip Lang Crosby, 27, twin of Dennis, is the "big brother" of the group. Husky, and surprisingly nimble on his feet for his size, he looks more like a football guard than a song-and-dance man. And he was, as a letterman at Washington State University, where he studied animal husbandry and agriculture with the expectation of taking over his father's ranch in Elko, Nevada. Things didn't work out that way. His education interrupted by a term of army duty, including 13 months overseas in Schwinefurt, Germany, Phil returned to school with the stirrings of an interest in the entertainment business. At that time, he was leaning toward the production side, however, and he switched to the radio and television department to study production methods, design, and camera techniques. But the closer he got to show business, the more intrigued he became. When the idea of getting an act together first came up, he remembers, "I was a sitting duck." Phil admits he was dubious about what he might have to offer (and sometimes still is) but that he had to try. Phil's interest in sports remains a major element in his life. Like his brothers, he owns a small percentage of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and is a rabid fan. Two professional football pals, Charlie Toogood of the Rams and Harland Svare of the N.Y. Giants, are his partners in a thriving chain of Mexican food drive-ins. He and Denny frequently join in the semi-pro games of a basketball team sponsored by Ernie's House of Serfas restaurant. And all of the boys are great golfers. Phil is the handball champ of the three, and is also a pretty fair water skier. Phil admits to being handy around the house, and says working on his Dad's ranch was good training for a husband frequently called on to fix leaky water pipes and broken chair legs. He's an incorrigible TV fan, and likes to watch Westerns - any Western - for hours at a time.

I just know that I'm going to miss talking to my friend, Phil Crosby, as we did for over 40 years. I still miss his Dad immensely. But, having them around ever since I can remember as a young child, I really feel their presence surrounding me. I've always felt like I was a part of their family.

I'd like to close this with a poem from a very dear friend, Wally Hogue.

Priscilla J. Koernig

PHIL

By W. E. Hogue

He was one of the sons
Of the world's greatest crooner
Devoted to his dad's memory
At a height almost lunar.

Never faltering in
The good thoughts of his father
When there were others
Who wouldn't even bother.

Becoming a father, himself, to loving
Kids: Mary, Flip, Brian and Dixie Lee
Had to remind him of his youth
Sitting by his pretty mother's knee.

Brian is gone as is mom, pop
And now this Crosby named Phil
But somehow I feel they are
Altogether singing on a heavenly hill.

Palm tree carol on endless loop

Member John Wall of Melbourne, Victoria in Australia spotted a nice article in the Herald Sun newspaper in December which we have pleasure in reproducing here.

After years of watching kids wearing tea towels and dressing gowns for the annual nativity play, there is something refreshing about the Christmas concert as a way of ending the school year. You can rely on children to put a fresh perspective on the Christmas standards, which is just as well because the tyranny of the seasonal tune shows no signs of slackening.

It is one of life's mysteries how a song that is heard only once or twice a year — if you're lucky — stays in your head with such perfect recall that you know every word of it when you hear it a year later. Or indeed, decades later. Those of us exposed to Bing Crosby and the Andrew Sisters' Christmas songs in infancy can still recall the words to the whole album, and I discount *Silent Night* and *Jingle Bells,* which had lives independent of Bing and the girls. No, it's the strange songs, such as Bing's version of a tune called *Mele Kalikimaka* (it's the thing to say on a bright Hawaiian Christmas Day, according to the song lyrics) which stay with you.

No other recording artist I've heard has done this song. And as far as I can ascertain, it is only on one record, the one my father had. So imagine my surprise when I walked into a city department store last week to hear Bing and the Andrews Sisters crooning their way through *Mele Kalikimaka* on the in-store music system. I turned optimistically to the tall, young shop assistant, hoping to be directed to where I could find and buy the CD. For historical purposes, of course.

"Excuse me," I asked, "but is the CD playing available here?"

"This song?" he asked. "No sir, this music is supplied by satellite." Then he walked off. Perhaps he was joking. Surely in-store music is not supplied by satellite? Whose satellite would do that, and why would they choose *Mele Kalikimaka* for deep-space transmission? Could it be that somewhere else in the world was hearing Bing warble, "That's the island greeting that we send to you from the land where palm trees sway"?

On reflection, however, I realised that particular line of reasoning was a step too far. Bing's tune had not girdled the Earth, just a particular shopping store chain. At least I think so.

The shop assistant could have been having a lend of me. Nonetheless, it reveals how these tunes can inveigle their way into your memory bank.

Nowadays, the range of possibilities with Christmas songs is greater than ever. Some friends have given us a CD culled from their music collection that features an unusual range of naggingly catchy Christmas tunes. For the past week, we have been exposed to *Santo Claus is Doing the Monkey* by Arnold Dover, Gayla Peevey doing *I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas,* and Speedy Gonzalez singing *The Hat I Got for Christmas is Too Big.* All of which make *Mele Kalikimaka* seem positively mainstream. This education did not stop there.

The school concert included some unusual arrangements of the old standards and a tune called *Chrissimas Day.* This song involved drakes, crows, pigs and sheep and a chorus of *Chrissimas Day,* plus some clapping, waving, standing and sitting. There did not appear to be any direct connection to the Christmas story, but then again, this was clearly not a song about what was going on in the manger.

It had a wider relevance, and it seems churlish for anyone who has *Mele Kalikimaka* on endless loop in their head to be too hard on anyone's choice of a Christmas tune.

So with that in mind, and to quote Bing: "Here we know that Christmas will be green and bright, the sun to shine by day and all the stars at night, *Mele Kalikimaka* is a wise way to say Merry Christmas too you."

You have to hear it to believe it. Trust me.

Nick Richardson

(Editor: Nick is a lecturer in print journalism at RMIT University in Melbourne and I emailed him to thank him for his article. By coincidence, my own 27-year-old daughter asked me to tape 'Mele Kalikimaka' for her in December as she wished to play it in her office. It had made an impact on her as a child. The things we do to our children!)

Christmas calls for a double dose of Der Bingle

Another pleasant article about Bing was written by Patrick Butters and included in the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper of December 23.

'Tis the season to laugh at Bing Crosby.

There are only a few days left to take in some Bing. Every year around this time, to get in the holiday mood, lots of us grab well-worn copies of the films "White Christmas" and "Holiday Inn." Or we play the CDs "Bing Crosby Sings I Wish You A Merry Christmas" or his classic "Merry Christmas."

Bing is a Christmas tradition, like putting up a tree, wrapping presents or complaining about the commercialism. Who knows why Crosby has grown to personify Christmas. Obviously, his vocal collaboration with composer Irving Berlin created the most successful Christmas record of all time, "White Christmas." But maybe Bing's light, effortless, easygoing air - not to mention his Santa's pipe - provides a laid-back antidote to the frenzy that surrounds the holiday.

I seek out Bing during the Yuletide for my own reasons. Every year, my best friend Dan and I look forward to watching "White Christmas." Everybody knows the 1954 musical: It stars Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen, and is the sentimental story of how two good-hearted showbiz types make Christmas merry for an old friend in the Army. They get dates, too. But the best part is Bing, and his casual, hipster, free-for-all attitude. There are so many "Bingisms" in that movie that Dan and I laugh way beyond the patience of anyone watching with us.

Like when Crosby extols to Clooney the virtues of dreaming about a type of woman according to the sandwich he eats. If he eats roast beef, he dreams about a "first sacker." If it's turkey, up pops a "scatback." (I think the DVD version has subtitles.) I know this is the Bing's English, but I actually don't want to know the meaning of this stuff. Then, to make the jazz complete, Bing picks up the sandwiches and heads to the fireplace, gesturing toward a milk carton and booms, "Grab the cow." Classic.

The movies show Crosby was indeed the all-purpose star of the buddy-movie, with chemistry not just limited to his famous partner Bob Hope. In "White Christmas," when Kaye tries to steer Bing toward Clooney, Crosby audibly whispers, "Pushing, pushing," into his water glass.

In "Holiday Inn," Bing says to Fred Astaire junk like "Take a slug from the mug" when the rest of us would say, "Have some coffee." Crosby deceptively stole his movies by sitting back. Kaye seems almost too eager to be funny and Astaire in "Holiday Inn" is pretty nasty.

Bing's chemistry crossed over to partners in sound, too. Frank Sinatra and Crosby shine in "We Wish You the Merriest," an average tune livened up by the friendly rivals. And Bing's 1977 duet with David Bowie, "Peace on Earth/The Little Drummer Boy" is marvelous on so many levels. Most people were taken aback at pairing Mr. Christmas with Bowie, who spent much of his career passing himself off as a woman. But the song, which was a scene from Crosby's final Christmas special, is poignant exactly because of the pairing. Bowie comes off as earnest, talking about his family, reminding us that he has a 6-year-old son and the kid's name isn't Ziggy Stardust Jr.

Crosby is wistful, accepting that his time had passed. His daughter Mary Frances later said her father knew the disappointment of being in less demand by the public. ("It's been a long time since I've been the new anything," he tells Bowie.) And neither singer knew that two months after the taping, in October 1977, Crosby would be dead.

Like "Peace on Earth / The Little Drummer Boy," Crosby could put a subtle spin even on the most infernal Christmas song. His "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" fit the romance of the film "When Harry Met Sally." Bing's "Winter Wonderland" bounces differently from the typical versions. Crosby's best is "Do You Hear What I Hear?" A strong, bold presentation, the song is spiritual but not preachy or pious. And the imagery is as exciting as stars across the night sky.

So maybe there is something to the old boy, who we can't seem to escape every holiday season. As The Washington Post said of Bing Crosby when he died: "You could warm your hands over his voice."

Patrick Butters

BING'S FIRST RECORD

One query which often crops up concerns the speed of Bing's first recording and whether it was an acoustic or electric recording. In BINGANG of June 1989, **Bob Ault** confronted the problem and we have great pleasure in reproducing the article again now.

Quite a few years ago, the Bing Crosby Historical Society issued a tribute record that included Bing's very first recording, "I've Got the Girl." Bill Osborn, who produced and annotated the B.C.H.S. disc, mentions in his notes that Bing always said that his and Al's singing on the initial recording reminded him of two chipmunks. Bill continues: "There was a reason for this. After the number had been cut, it was issued at a faster speed to give it a more jazzy flavor. Just recently the speed was modified and returned to the actual speed at which the song was originally recorded."

Bill Osborn's "restoration" pitched the recording in the key of E instead of F, the pitch on the original record and also the key of the sheet music. Generally speaking, Bill's theory was not well accepted by Crosby collectors.

Your editor [Wayne Martin] asked Bob Ault, a St. Louis collector of old records, author, radio engineer, and broadcaster, to study the record and give his opinion. You will be surprised at his findings. Whether or not you agree with Bob's conclusions, he is certainly well-qualified to give us an expert evaluation concerning the pitch of this recording.

For several years now, controversy has raged over Columbia 824-D, the Don Clark Hotel Biltmore Orchestra disc of Walter Donaldson's "I've Got the Girl." This is an attempt to settle these disputes.

One question has been whether this disc was recorded by the electrical or acoustical method. Columbia put a chart in their 1927 catalog indicating which recordings were which, and the break-off point was around the 320-D mark. However, the fact that Columbia still recorded acoustically for their Harmony label until 1927 led to the controversy. Another factor is that whenever Bing talked about that first session, he referred to a recording horn, that familiar relic of acoustical recording days.

So far, I've not been able to find any sure-fire documentation, but in 1926 the Victor Company's West Coast studio and plant were in Oakland, California, with all Los Angeles recording being done with "portable" (it only filled *one* truck) equipment. Possibly this was the case for Columbia as well, for they were doing a considerable amount of remote recording at this time. Bing's reference to the recording horn can indicate one of two things: (1) The horn used by Columbia for the Harmony recordings was in the studio; or (2) The

microphone used for the Don Clark session had a horn attached to focus the sound on a not-too-sensitive microphone—a fairly common practice in the mid-twenties,

Thanks to friend Wayne Martin, I've been able to hear two reissues of this disc and can definitely say that it was recorded electrically. The copy used for the Bing Crosby Historical Society's Tribute Record No. 2 was apparently not in the best of shape, and the subsequent filtering leaves a little room for doubt, but the clarity and wide frequency range of the copy found on Jazum 39 leaves no question in my mind.

Now comes the other problem - the speed of the recording turntable. After many years of study, I've come to the conclusion that the only thing consistent about the recording speed of the early electrical recordings (1925-30) is their inconsistency.

I once thought that the various record companies actually recorded at the speed they advised customers to set their turntables for. Having given up that misconception several years back, I held on to the idea that at least the electrically-recorded discs were at the right speed. About four years ago, I found that assumption to be incorrect as well. The idea seemed to be, "If the turntable spins, we can cut a groove." The Berliner Gramophone discs of the 1890s tended to be cut at about 56 rpm, give or take three or four rpm within a side - the recording turntables being turned by hand. With the introduction of weight-and-governor-driven recording turntables the speed became even more constant within a side, but the speeds could be anywhere from 68 to 84 rpm. Nothing was very scientific yet; Victor prescribed 78 as the correct speed for their discs, but most of their product cut after about 1910 runs in the neighborhood of 75-76 rpm. Columbia recommended 80 as the correct speed, but generally their discs were cut at or below Victor's speed. One exception is a 1923 Original Memphis Five session which was cut at 83 rpm. Although the sound reached the groove by an electronic path, the speeds continued to be quite variable until about 1930. This point was driven home some time back when I was preparing a 1927 English Columbia recording of Liszt's "Les Preludes" with Felix Weingartner and the London Symphony Orchestra for broadcast. All four sides were cut at different speeds, the first at about 74 rpm and each one slightly faster with the last at about 77.5 rpm.

Played back at 78.26 rpm (the "standard" speed, but still 1.74 slower than Columbia was claiming at the time), "I've Got the Girl" plays rather well with the orchestra in the key of F, but when the voices of Crosby and Rinker come in, there is definitely something wrong. Human voices don't normally sound like that. Some have said that Bing and Al just sang that way then. They didn't either! This was only two months before their first recording with Whiteman, "Wistful and Blue." The Jazum issue retains the 78.26 speed, and this fact made my figuring possible, for the turntable I used for this bit of detective work was calibrated for variable speed by tenths of one percent. The Bing Crosby Historical Society disc was obviously produced by someone who was on the right track; they just didn't go quite far enough, apparently thinking "It couldn't possibly be that far off." Well, believe me, folks, it can. "I've Got the Girl" was cut at 70.5 rpm!

The British version, with the Don Clark Orchestra masquerading under a pseudonym, showing a recommended speed of 80.

The B.C.H.S. disc has the orchestra playing in E, and the voices sound better, but I checked with another friend, Herbert D. Freer, who spent many years arranging for dance bands, and he said that the only time that key would have been used was when the orchestra was almost entirely made up of strings, with the wind instrument parts kept very simple. In other words, for a group with the instrumentation and style of Clark, it would be pure insanity! E-flat, however, is a wonderful key for an orchestra like Clark's - the key fitting all the instruments (except perhaps the violin) like a glove; and what's more, when the disc is pitched in E-flat the familiar voices are clearly heard - sounding just like we know they did from their Whiteman recordings (Bing is the lower voice).

I hope this little discussion helps clear up the controversy over Columbia 824-D. By the way, does anyone know where I can find a copy?

Bob Ault

And talking of 78s, Wayne Martin provides much needed information about those treasured discs.

MASTERS? WHAT MASTERS?

A recent discussion on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board led me to believe that a lot of people in today's world do not understand how the old 78 rpm records were manufactured and why most of the masters (the original recordings) simply do not exist. The truth is that Bing's (and everybody else's) master recordings generally went in the trash bin the day they were processed for manufacturing. If you wanted to find them you would have to search through a landfill somewhere.

The masters were recorded on either wax or acetate discs and were extremely fragile and delicate. They could be played *(very* carefully!) for checking purposes,

but quite often were just checked with a microscope or magnifying glass to see if there were any mechanical flaws.

The first step in processing records to be shipped to your record store was to "grow" a metal negative of the master by a process called electrolysis. Some of you may recall science experiments in your youth where you copper-plated an object using a tank of liquid, some batteries, and a few copper coins. That is similar to the process used in making 78s. After the metal shell (coating) had formed on the original recording, it was removed by brute force, using a chisel or other prying instrument. It was a matter of the survival of the fittest, the metal copy surviving and the master succumbing to its destiny. (I once saw a picture of a man separating the two with a huge chisel and wondered how either survived!) This copy of the recording is properly known as a "matrix," "master dye," "master shell" or just "shell."

As we said, the matrix was a negative, with "land" where there were "groves" and "grooves" where there was "land" on the master. It was unplayable with the styli that were available at the time. The matrix could have been used to press the "positive" copies that were to be made, but there was a problem with that. Only a certain number of usable copies could be pressed before the matrix would wear out and could no longer be used.

And so we come to the second step of the "metal parts" process. From the master dye, a positive copy was formed by the same process of electrolysis mentioned before. This copy was called the "mother." It could be played, but there was no particular reason to do so. (Probably a metal record played with a metal needle would not have sounded very well, anyway!)

From the mother a large number of "stampers" could be made to actually press the consumers' copies of the recording. And, of course, additional copies of the mother could be made from the matrix when the mother showed signs of wear.

The stampers were placed in the record press, which operated much like your waffle iron does, except it was a great deal larger and applied a lot more pressure per square inch than any waffle iron you ever owned. In the bottom part of the "waffle iron" a stamper was placed face up. The press operator made a kind of sandwich on top of that with labels for the two sides and a "cookie" made of preheated shellac compound. In the top of the "waffle iron" was the stamper containing the other side of the record. The press closed with a puff of steam, a pause for the record to form, then a rush of cold water through the press to cool it off. The press opened, and the record was taken out and trimmed around the edges of any excess material, and it was ready to be placed in an envelope or album for sale.

All of this worked very well from the latter part of the nineteenth century until the fifties of the twentieth century when 78s were discontinued. Incidentally, the same record presses were used to make LPs, except a vinyl compound was used instead of the shellac compound. With LPs there was a great advantage in the fact that the original master was on tape, and any number of disc masters could be made without damage to the sound.

The "metal parts" of the 78s were what the record companies carefully preserved so they could make pressings of the recordings whenever they wished. Sadly, these metal parts deteriorated over time, and that is why so many of the older recordings are reissued on LP and CD using good quality 78s owned by collectors.

A good example of what could happen to a particular recording is Bing's 1942 recording of "White Christmas." Because of the huge demand for copies of this record, so many stampers were made from the mothers and so many mothers made from the matrix that the matrix just wore out. There was no acceptable alternate take to process, so the recording had to be completely redone in 1947.

Before we go, let's discuss the Decca masters that do exist. In July 1943 Decca decided that it needed to have a backup of the recordings that were made. They installed a second turntable in the studio—a transcription table. This used 16-inch discs which played at 33 1/3 rpm, the standard for the broadcasting industry at the time. The microgroove recording used for LPs had not been yet invented, so standard grooves, similar to those used on 78s, were used. These discs played for about 15 minutes on each side.

In 1985 Club Crosby received a letter from Steve Hoffman of MCA describing these back up transcriptions:

"Everything after July 1943 was recorded on transcription and 78 rpm wax (at the same time) until 1946. Then only the transcriptions were used. The "take" was dubbed to wax or acetate. From 1943-1946 your 78 rpm disc is first generation. The transcriptions were just used as protection. From 1946 to May 1949 (when tape came in) the 78 is a second-generation dub of the approved take. They figured "Why waste the wax? We can just dub from the big disc."

He goes on to say that only one song was recorded on each large disc, but all takes of the song were included on that disc. It is to be hoped that these transcriptions are still available at MCA

We could quibble about the 1943-1946 transcriptions as to whether they are actually "masters," since they were recorded on a different machine and might exhibit slightly different tonal qualities or even a pitch variation from the 78 turntable version. However, since they are from the same performances as the 78s, let's not do that.

One final point: The taped masters that Decca made from 1949 are presumably still around. At least let's hope so!

Wayne L. Martin

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has produced a new Bing stamp which is smaller than its predecessors and this is reproduced below in its actual size. The price is £3 for 25 and unfortunately Arthur has to restrict this offer to UK members only.

Also Arthur still has some of the coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent times and this has been produced as a limited issue of 250. It costs £3 for UK members. Sadly it has proved uneconomical to also offer it to USA and Canadian readers. The collage would look lovely in a frame. See page 16 of the Summer 2002 issue of BING for a photograph of the collage.

Michael Crampton, 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 2NL, UK (Phone: 0113 2689556, email: michael@club-crosby.org)

Michael has 2 spare copies of "Bing Crosby" by Michael Freedland which he will make available for £9 each (including UK postage). Also he has two copies of "Bing - A Diary of a Lifetime" by Malcolm Macfarlane which can be obtained for £12 each (again inc. postage in the UK).

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003, USA (Tel: (212) 533-1572, Fax: (212) 673-1496, e-mail: footlight1@aol.com)

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. See also www.footlight.com

Malcolm Macfarlane, 3 Osborne Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK (Phone: 01625 528942, e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com)

"I find myself with many surplus Bing items which I should like to pass on to other Crosby fans at nominal prices. There are singles, EPs, LPs, cassettes, videos (PAL format) and books, including a copy of 'Call Me Lucky'. Email, phone or write for details. Send a second class stamp if writing."

Wayne Martin, 435 So. Holmes Ave. Kirkwood, MO 63122, USA

FINAL ISSUE OF "BINGANG"

"I have extra copies of the final issue of "Bingang." If you would like copies, you can have them for the cost of shipping: $2.00 apiece in U.S.A. and Canada, sent by first-class mail; $5.00 overseas, sent by air mail. U.S. funds only, check or money order on a U.S. bank. Make payable to Wayne L. Martin, and send your order to our Kirkwood address."

Dieter Pressler, P.O.Box 1703, Hoodsport, WA 98548, USA (e-mail:dbpressler@mailbug.com , phone:[360]-877-6199)

Dieter offers this ribbon in Bing's colors. It can be worn or displayed in a variety of configurations and pinned with different tie-tacs. He will mail it anywhere in the world for US$5.50, or US$4.50 each for more than one.

Neil Robinson, Crosby Lodge, 19 Alder Grove, Burton on Trent, DE15 9QR, UK (Phone: 01283 533845)

As I have 572 of Bing's British 78s, I wondered if any member may be able to assist me in getting nearer to the magical 599? I need the following:

Brunswick 10"

1182 (Warner Brunswick), 01252, 01270,

01285, 01397, 1404, 02499 (without picture), 02534 (LA 1051), 01436, 01437, 05385, 05403

Brunswick 12" 0105, 107, 0107

London 10" HL U8593 Columbia 10" 5702

HMV 10" B5461, B5497, B5509, B6047, BD5066, BD5755

Parlophone 10" E6148, R331, R339, R3526

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

Ray Steele, Heather Ridge Apts. No. 408, 45530 McIntosh Drive, Chilliwack, B.C., V2P 7Y8, Canada (e-mail: rasteele@dowco.com)

"Would you please enter these Bing records in the next Trading Post section. FOR SALE:
Palladium, Treasury of Songs (6 record set)
High Society ——lots of LP's and 78's too many to list."

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins, address on inside cover

Wig still has a small supply of his 'must have' discography *Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings - from 78s to CDs*. Get one while you still can! Softbound, $17.50 postpaid in the USA. UK members can obtain the book from Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 0DN, UK (phone 02392-666677). Price: UK £10 (inc. p. & p.), Mainland Europe & Ireland £11 (inc. p. & p.).

Mrs. J. M. Wilbourne, 39 Lotherton Close, Plympton, Plymouth, PL7 1QQ, UK (phone 01752 319490)

"I have approx. 160 78s of Bing Crosby and 18 LPs which I need to dispose of. I would preferably like an offer for the whole lot. I am in the process of listing them all."

Please contact Mrs. Wilbourne direct for further details.

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail bingsfriends81@earthlink.net - Web Site address - http://home.earthlink.net/~bingsfriends81/)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818,

e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net,

website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £19.80 for Europe and £26.40 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Movie Memories, c/o Chris Roberts, 10 Russet Close, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 8YJ, UK

A priority for the fans of the golden age of the cinema, covering the films and stars of the 1930's to the 50s, both Hollywood and the UK. A thrice yearly magazine, with up-to-date news and well illustrated, which costs £12 for a year for UK readers and £15 for those from overseas.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Michelle Malik, 14611 Valley Vista Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA (email: cantorfan@aol.com

website: http://www.eddiecantor.com/)

Rosemary Clooney, http://www.rosemaryclooney.com/

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

The International Mills Brothers Society, c/o Daniel Clemson, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2727, USA (Phone: (717) 697-4271, e-mail: MillsBros1@aol.com, website: www.millsbrotherssociety.org/)

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869, website: www.btinternet.com/~mike.leach e-mail: mike.leach@btinternet.com)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683, website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Kate Smith Commemorative Society, P. O. Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910, USA (e-mail: pinky@wzrd.com - website: http://katesmith.org/)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

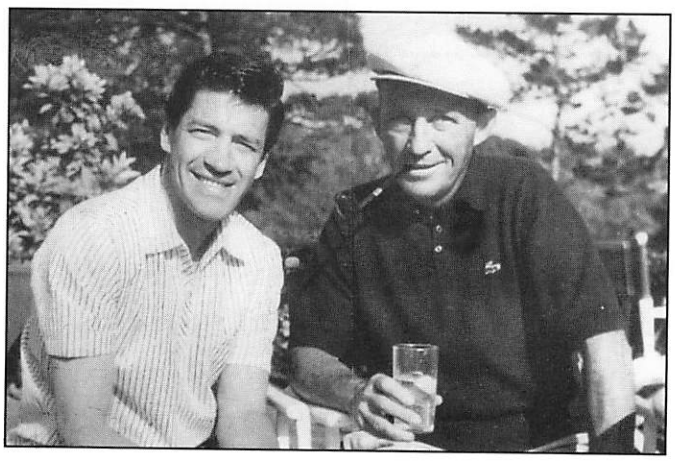
1. THE MAN WHO WOULD BE BING
The Life Story of Michael Holliday

by Ken Crossland. Published by The Book Guild, Temple House, 25 High St., Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2LU, UK (Phone: 01273 472534, email: emma @bookguild.co.uk). ISBN 1 85776 841 8, price £16.95

Your Editor has some difficulty in being unbiased about this excellent new book. Ken and I have been friends for over twenty years and I have been encouraging him to write this book for much of that time. Michael Holliday's voice was at times uncannily similar to the Bing voice of the 50s and it was interesting to hear the gasps of amazement at Hofstra in November, 2002 when Ken played samples of Mike's singing. I know I have been close to the book as it evolved, but I must say I found the finished product absolutely riveting and hard to put down. However, for a truly objective perspective on the book, I turned to a friend in his thirties who knows little about Bing and nothing about Michael Holliday but he does know a good book when he reads it. This is what Kevin Jones has to say.

"Why am I so Starry Eyed" sang Michael Holliday in his 1960 number one hit. It's a sentiment that permeated Holliday's short life, as the mantle of fame sat uneasily on his shoulders and his ambition fought a losing battle with the trappings that fame brought. This is the main theme driving Ken Crossland's splendid concise biography of the "British Bing Crosby", born plain Norman Milne of simple Liverpool stock.

After a brief skate through Holliday's early life, no different from any seafaring lad's in the late 30s and early 40s, war experiences included, Crossland wisely concentrates the rest of his book on the singing career. The successful portion of that career lasted a mere 8 years and covered a period when the face of popular music would be changed forever through, firstly Elvis Presley and, later The Beatles and all that they gave birth to. However, Crossland points out, singers such as Perry Como and Holliday himself still had a place in this world and Holliday's success in the years between 1955 and 1963 bears this out.



Mike meets his idol.

But Holliday was troubled by demons other than any challenges to his place in popular culture. Ambitious for fame and adoration, yet uneasy amongst his audience ("All I want is my private life to myself and that's something you can't have with success" he said in 1958); Forever chasing girls, but devastated by the split in the early 60s from the wife he loved; and driven to despair by the tangle of tax problems he found himself in, as his comparative wealth grew. Perhaps fairly to his subject, Crossland does not attempt any psychoanalysis to pinpoint any single factor that brought Michael Holliday down, but suggests that the sum of the various parts caused the nervous breakdown and eventual death. As also befits a fan of the singer, Crossland, in the book's coda, throws up a number of questions to cast some doubt on the previously accepted view that Holliday took his own life.

Of course, Bing Crosby's shadow is bound to loom large over any study of Michael Holliday's work and this book is no exception. Crossland skilfully points up the obvious vocal similarities and the relaxed image, both had professionalism, but contrasts the "real" lives of the two. Crosby was "a man totally in control of his life" who would not be told where to go or who to see. For Crosby, this of course was a product of the 30 years stardom he had enjoyed by the time the two met. Holliday, with his managers, agents and record company executives and, moreover, his fragile personality, was not quite so fortunate.

Anyone with an interest in popular music of the 50s and 60s and, indeed, the early development of the pop charts as we see them today, will enjoy Ken Crossland's book. "Warts 'n' all" it may be, but fans of the singer will appreciate the warmth and respect the author ultimately has for his subject and the voice that was his gift.

Kevin Jones

Editor's comments:

My thanks to Kevin for his overview of this superb new addition to our Bing libraries. In many ways the book is about Bing and his influence and as such, I strongly recommend it to our members. You should find an insert with this issue which will enable you to pick up the book at a discount.

2. The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television

In our last issue, we mentioned this new book which has been compiled by Lionel Pairpoint, Greg Van Beek and your Editor with much help from Martin McQuade. Bob Achorn has studied this and offers his thoughts on Bing's television work.

The perception lingers that television came too late for Bing. The first specific Crosby TV special didn't show up until 1954—at the 30-year mark of Bing's 53-year career as a fulltime performer. By then, his five-year reign as the most popular film star in the United States had ended. His halcyon days as a radio star had faded. Most of his No. 1 recording hits were behind him. There were suggestions that he was very much on the down slope of a fabulous career.

And yet—as the invaluable Pairpoint-Macfarlane-Van Beek recounting of Bing on TV makes clear—he had a rich television history. He may have been a bit slow to get into the field, but he made up for it.

Their new book identifies 293 Crosby television appearances from 1948 to 1977. That's a highly respectable record for endurance and acceptance in a medium where many performers wear out their reception quickly. Bing's television specials drew high ratings in the USA. He was a welcome guest on many other shows. For years before his TV days Bing was typically available to his public only in canned form—taped radio shows, films, carefully-made recordings. There was an impression that he felt a need for protection, that he might not perform adequately if he exposed himself live to current audiences. By that point in his career, many observers had long forgotten his delightful live radio shows and his triumphant performances in the Whiteman era, in vaudeville and in personal appearances.

Bing with Edward G. Robinson on the Olympic Telethon.

The live Olympic telethon in 1952 proved those perceptions about protection to be nonsense. He strolled in front of the cameras very much "the old Bing," totally

comfortable, relaxed and casual, working well with Bob Hope and others, and making his mark in a field of stars. It was Kraft Music Hall reborn. At that point, the "experts" admitted that maybe Bing was not afraid of live performances, that he meant it when he said he preferred pre-recording only because it gave him time to handle his heavy work schedule and have a bit of fun. He went on to other live television performances with great success and, with video recording improving so much, went back on tape with little loss of effectiveness.

The Pairpoint-Macfarlane-Van Beek tome illustrates vividly how much fine television work he added to his movie-radio-recording schedule. The trio found that Bing offered the public more than 1,425 song performances in his television work. It's true that much of his singing was in duets or medleys; only a short part of each song was performed. But there were many solos as well. If his voice was not what it was in the late '30s, his style and charisma carried even more impact.

He tended to go with familiar material. Even that needs to be qualified. In his television work, he showed wide-ranging interests. He sang 725 songs only one time. A good number of them were melodies more strongly identified with other performers—songs like Kaye Ballard's "Lazy Afternoon," Al Jolson's "Let Me Sing and I'm Happy," Ethel Merman's "Let's Be Buddies," Sinatra's "You Go to My Head," and Gene Kelly's (and Frances Langford's) "You Are My Lucky Star".

Another 136 songs—mostly old favorites—were sung more than once for a total of about 700 repeat performances. As every Bing follower knows "White Christmas" topped that list. He sang it 33 times on television, far more than any other single number. No wonder he thanked Irving Berlin for writing it for him, as Berlin should have thanked Crosby for singing it. With periodic Christmas specials, the Hollywood Palace shows and various guest appearances, Bing sang "White Christmas" on television almost every Christmas season from 1954 to the posthumous special in 1977. As Pairpoint, Macfarlane and Van Beek noted, he sometimes dubbed the song to an old recording. But there were other arrangements over the years.

Among the rest, "Swinging on a Star" was performed 19 times. "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day" understandably had 13 television performances. As the longtime Crosby theme song, I suppose it was heard on Crosby broadcasts over the decades far more than any other single number. No wonder Bing cut himself in on the royalties. (And wrote some of the words, although he couldn't always remember whether it was Where... or When.... as amusingly highlighted at the beginning of his 1977 Christmas special)

Bing gave his last major hit, "True Love," 12 television performances. Another fine Cole Porter number from the same "High Society" score, "Now You Has Jazz," was done seven times on television by Bing. "The Road to Morocco" was sung on 11 TV shows, reflecting Bob Hope's frequent guest appearances. There were 10 Crosby performances on TV to an early movie song, "I'm an Old Cowhand," and 10 also to a later group-sing, "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening." "Please" and "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" were done eight times.

It is important to keep in mind the change in the music industry and in popular culture during Crosby's television years. Teenagers screamed for Bing in the early 1930s and for Frank in the early 1940s. By the '50s and '60s a much darker, rougher brand of music had captured the youth market. Songwriters who once pushed Crosby to introduce their material were now living on their royalties, crowded out by the new wave of rock and worse. Bing dipped into that new world very lightly and not much on television. It was not his style.

His 28-episode situation comedy in 1964 featured a song or two each week, but usually in a warm family singalong mode that reflected the spirit of the series. It's worth noting, though, that he did work in a couple of Cole Porter standards, "Night and Day" (always a challenge for Bing) and "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," (one of his many successes.) It has never been entirely clear to what extent Crosby controlled his own material or took what was pressed on him, not only by the influential Jack Kapp, but by radio and television producers and his musical conductors. Presumably by his television years, Bing could and did make most of his own choices.

When songs came along that reminded him of earlier times, he took a run at them. So he sang on television "Send in the Clowns," "The Way We Were," and "The Only Way to Go," and performed them well. He reprised some of his late-movie hits, often with new partners. While he did perform "Now You Has Jazz" with Louis Armstrong on TV, he also tried it with Ben Vereen, Dean Martin and others. Similarly with "Style," on which he teamed with such non-Sinatra-Martin types as Mickey Rooney and the late David Janssen.

There were many television highlights. Who can forget Bing's uptempo version of "Ol Man River" or that incredible duet with Johnny Mercer of 43 songs?

The Pairpoint-Macfarlane-Van Beek volume demonstrates clearly that Bing served up a grand mix of old standards and newer material, all performed with skill and style. It added up to a winning Crosby career on television. He may have been late, but he still could be great.

Bob Achorn

(Editor: The book was a limited edition of only 200 copies and the cost is £24.99 (including post and packing) in the UK, £26.99 in Ireland and Europe, $50 in the USA and Au$65.99 in Australia and New Zealand. We pre-sold the vast majority of the books but there are still some left. If you want one, order it quickly from Michael Crampton or from your local representative.)

"You Must Be One of The Newer Fellas"—Bing joins forces with Clay Aiken

In our last issue, we managed to include a late note about Bing's forthcoming duet with Clay Aiken. Greg Van Beek now tells us the full story.

Something, which can best be described as a "vocal event", occurred this past November, and the results of which were nothing short of phenomenal. The unsurpassed voice of Christmas, Bing Crosby himself, was magically brought back to life to give us yet one more new performance to enjoy and treasure, and I am both pleased and honored to have played a role in making it happen.

Bing has sung with just about every singer you can imagine. From Al Jolson to David Bowie. From Connee Boswell to Bette Midler. He is no stranger to duets. In fact, it can be argued that no other performer has sung more duets than Bing Crosby. Now, he adds yet another name to this staggeringly long list, that of 25 year old Clay Aiken.

Clay who you ask? Realizing there may be more than a few ICC members who are not familiar with this 'skinny' kid from Raleigh, North Carolina, let me give you a little background. Clay Aiken sky-rocketed to fame virtually over night, due to his appearances as a contestant on the hugely successful Fox television network series American Idol 2, in which contestants compete for a recording contract through an inter-active voting process in which the show's viewers help choose the winner. During the months that the series ran, Clay tenored his way up the competition's ranks, and placed second to Ruben Studdard — he missed winning by a mere 134,400 votes out of 24 million, a margin of one half of one percent. But loser is definitely not a word to be used in describing Clay Aiken. His debut album on RCA Records "Measure of a Man," has earned double-platinum honors for U.S. shipments of more than 2 million units, according to November certifications by the Recording Industry Assn. of America.

So how did this young pop singer, with scores of screaming teenage fans following his every move, wind up singing with an "American idol" of two generations past—the "original" American idol if you will? For that we need to go back to the first week of October 2003, when my friends Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall were contacted by a producer from the Nick at Nite cable TV network, Mr. Gary Tellalian. Gary, an independent producer, was working on a Holiday TV special for the network that would evoke memories of those classic Christmas TV specials hosted by Perry Como, Andy Williams, Bob Hope, and of course, Bing Crosby. He told Bob that he was a fan of Bing's, and that "when you think of Christmas, you naturally think of Bing Crosby", so he wanted to include him as part of the special! The thought of creating a "virtual duet", as was done so successfully with Natalie Cole and her dad Nat "King" Cole, pairing Bing with a current contemporary singer entered his mind, and he initially contacted Bob and Ron searching for suitable footage of Bing. Bob, in turn, knowing of the research I've done into Bing's television career, then contacted me.

The name Clay Aiken as a possible duet partner for Bing was suggested almost simultaneously by Ron and Bob, based on his wholesome, clean-cut image and impressive debut. Not to mention the fact that with his protruding ears, expressive eyes and bright smile, the similarities to Bing are very evident. As Bob said "he almost looks like a young Bing Crosby." The obvious choice for a song for them to perform together was 'White Christmas', so Gary initially was searching for footage of Bing performing it alone, preferably on an uncluttered set. Between Ron, Bob, and myself, we came up with six different versions of 'White Christmas' from television, which might prove suitable, ranging from 1958-77. Knowing the legal obstacles involved in licensing anything from the Hollywood Palace series, Gary wanted to avoid using Bing's performances from those Christmas shows, so we were somewhat limited on what he could choose from.

Gary wasn't sure they'd be able to secure Clay for the show on such short notice, so I had actually suggested a few other singers as suitable alternatives. To be honest, I wasn't too keen on the idea of Clay duetting with Bing on 'White Christmas'. Any song but that one! That song is, to say the least, special, and the idea of another male singer performing it with Bing might make it become a competition of sorts. I thought a female singer would be more suitable and would compliment Bing much better, as opposed to competing with him. One name I suggested, as I had saw her headline a theatrical-style show titled "The Joys of Christmas" last year, was Martina McBride. You could have heard a pin drop when she sang 'O Holy Night' a capella to a sold-out crowd of 15,000. With a powerful voice like that, I knew she could create an outstanding duet with Bing.

But Gary solved the dilemma by asking me "in case Clay doesn't want to do 'White Christmas', did Bing ever perform 'Little Drummer Boy' on television, besides the version with David Bowie?" Immediately, I answered 'yes', and cited his performance on the ABC-TV Bing Crosby Show special, which aired December 24, 1962. As it turned out, this is the only other available footage of Bing performing that song. Surprisingly, there are no other film or TV performances of 'Little Drummer Boy' by Bing, save for the aforementioned duet with David Bowie. Gary was very excited, especially when I told him this vintage 1962 performance was videotaped in color; the ABC-TV network's first TV special to be broadcast in color. He wanted to see this and the clips of 'White Christmas' ASAP, as the special was scheduled to air November 28, only about 6 weeks away. So, Ron Hall and I each dubbed some of the clips onto VHS tape for him, and Fed Ex-ed them overnight delivery.

Not long after this, Clay was signed on for the special, and said he preferred to do 'Drummer Boy' with Bing as opposed to 'White Christmas'. When we heard this, Gary and I each had the same idea; wouldn't it be great if we could recreate the duet with David Bowie, and have Clay perform 'Peace On Earth' as a counter-melody to Bing's 'Little Drummer Boy'. Gary, Ron, Bob and myself each saw the potential in this, that if a CD single was released to radio and the public, with an

accompanying music video for VH-1 and MTV to air, this could be a tremendous success, possibly garnering Bing another million-selling song and just maybe, another #1 hit on the pop charts!

Now came the hardest part of all; finding the original 2" quad master videotape of the show. Bob contacted Mrs. Crosby, and they discovered, much to their horror, they couldn't locate the master in Bing's personal collection, which is now stored in the former wine-cellar of the Crosby estate in Hillsborough. Bing only had a 16mm b/w film print of the show, so that he could view it at home with his own projector and screen (remember, VCR's were not as common-place as they are today when Bing passed away in 1977), and that was badly scratched from repeated viewings. It was at this time that I remembered seeing a special credit added to the end of that 1962 special when a truncated version aired on the Nostalgia cable channel in 1995. It read "thanks to the Special Collections Department of Georgia State University for facilitating the preservation of this program". I searched for GSU on the Internet, and located their contact information, which I forwarded onto Bob. He, in turn, phoned them, and, after an hour-long conversation, discovered that GSU did indeed possess the 2" quad tape master of this special, as well as for six other Bing Crosby ABC-TV specials from 1959-62! A major discovery for the Crosby family.

But, to license the 'Drummer Boy' clip, Gary would have to contact Cox Broadcasting in Atlanta, Georgia, as they own Bing Crosby Productions. This rang a bell, as I recalled reading in Fred Reynolds' excellent book on Bing's film career, "The Road To Hollywood", that Bing sold his interest in Bing Crosby Productions to Cox in 1971. This, in hindsight, may not have been a wise move, as nearly all of Bing's television specials from 1958 to about 1969 were Bing Crosby Productions (including the entire 1964-65 situation comedy series with Beverly Garland), and this means that the family no longer has sole control over them.

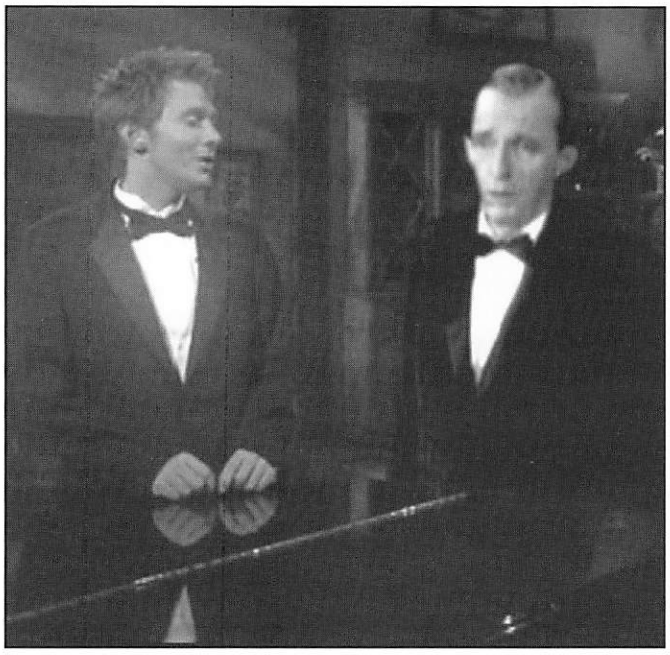
So, I did more searching on the Internet, and found the contact information for Cox Broadcasting, and Bob, in turn, duly phoned them. They were most co-operative, and said they would love to help, but that they had sold Bing Crosby Productions to Rysher Entertainment several years ago! After yet more searching on the Internet, this time for Rysher Entertainment, Bob and I let Gary contact them. He, in turn, got in touch with the Crosby family entertainment attorney, Mark Brodka, which just happens to be Mary Frances Crosby's husband, and with Rysher to negotiate licensing the clip for the special.

To further complicate matters, Georgia State University was unsure if they could loan out the 2" quad master! After several days of uncertainty, GSU finally agreed to let this be used by Gary and his staff. By the time all of this detective work and negotiating was completed, Gary had only about a week to accomplish what amounted to a month's worth of work! Clay Aiken taped his portion of the duet on November 14th to a closed set (no studio audience). He was back the following day (with a studio audience) to tape his dialogue scene with Martin Mull and Joyce DeWitt. The show was finally completed and delivered to the network Tuesday, November 25th, just three days before its premiere on Nick At Nite!

Gary sent me a detailed e-mail of some of the struggles they had with combining a forty-one year old piece of tape with a modern digital picture. Here's his most interesting explanation, in his own words:

> "Some background...Michael Levitt, our amazing and highly creative executive producer came up with the idea to pair Bing with Clay. Michael is truly a visionary...he's the one who came up with the jaw-dropping opening number to this year's TV Land Awards and he's the man behind all the great Billboard Awards. Michael's idea was to have Clay sing "White Christmas" with Bing. I was all for that.
>
> But I had just worked with Clay during the Miss America Pageant, which we produced, where he sang 'This Is The Night' and blew me away. I had never seen or heard him before and couldn't believe his voice. I thought that 'Peace On Earth' was better suited for his voice, which is where you came in and I couldn't be more grateful!!!
>
> Of course, you know about the difficulty in getting the color version Bing's 'Drummer Boy'. In fact, if it wasn't for you, we would have never found the two inch quad at Georgia State University. (How or why it ended up there is still a mystery.)
>
> This brings me to the quality of the footage. When we got a Digital Beta copy of the 2 inch quad, it was still of low quality. There were video hits and dropout on the tape and lines of interference throughout the show. Nothing really terrible, just not what we needed to make it look spectacular.
>
> The next step was deciding whether to put Clay into Bing's footage or bring Bing onto our set. After much debate, we decided on the latter. This gave us more control over where Bing could go and it also made it more magical. The down side was that it instantly made people think we were bringing Bing "back from the dead." It was not intentional, but people seemed to get that response because Bing was singing on our set.
>
> Next we had to isolate Bing from his footage. This was the hardest part and we only had four days to do it in, instead of the month that we really wanted! Having never done this, I hired one of the best effects guys in LA—Shawn Esposito—to do this. He and his partner Minky Billups spent long hours rotoscoping the footage against all odds in order to have it ready for Friday's (November 14th) shoot day with Clay.
>
> One major problem was that the cameras in Bing's day were not steady. They were drifting all over the place, not really visible to the naked eye, but moving quite a lot when you really examine it through the eyes of a computer. So Shawn stabilized the footage by picking one spot and forcing the computer to keep it in one place. Once that was done, they did the rotoscoping, then made identical black mattes and green mattes.
>
> When we shot Clay, the technical director was able to move Bing anywhere in the frame so that the director could pick his shot. I requested that for the long shots, we put Bing and Clay behind a piano to pay homage to Bing and Bowie, so in those scenes Bing is raised up and there is a separate matte for the piano (since Bing had no legs

in that part of the footage). *[Note: there is a choir seen behind Bing on this portion of the original footage, and Bing is only shown from about the waist up - GVB].*



Clay sang the song four times with four different camera angles. After the show was taped, I did a rough composite, which means I edited Clay with the proper angles and popped Bing in to his rough place. But there was still the matter of the video...it still looked old and not as clean as Clay's. So we put a filter on Bing to remove as much as the interference as possible, which worked and we darkened his tuxedo to match Clay's coloring. Then I added the "magical" effect to make Bing appear. *[Bing "magically" appeared in the scene through what looked like small glittering shooting stars - GVB].*

This worked pretty well, but Bing seemed to shake a bit in the first shots. Apparently, the stabilization did not work as well as we wanted. And sometimes, the mattes "shifted" so that Bing's head looked like it was throbbing.

Larry Jones, the President of Nick At Nite, asked if we could keep working on it to make it even better. I approached Shawn and he agreed to do it again. This was on Friday morning (November 21), one week before the show aired. It had to be delivered to the network by Tuesday!!!! So Shawn dropped everything and IN JUST TWO DAYS started from scratch, restabilizing the footage and rotoscoping practically the whole thing. (a side note...because I really wanted it to look like Bing was on our set, we did the same type of dissolves that we did for the other performers. As a result, some of the Bing footage was on the cutting room floor as we switched to Clay's close ups. So Shawn had less footage that he needed to work on, which was really lucky for us, with the time crunch!). One thing that Shawn did that was new was to add a slight highlight to one side of Bing's face to match the side lighting on Clay's .This really did wonders for the footage and it didn't compromise the color at all.

The new footage looked awesome, but when I did the composite, it still didn't match our video of Clay. As you pointed out, the difference in video technology then and now is huge, so it didn't look as perfect as we wanted. Michael had wanted a magical moment and it just wasn't reading that way. So Shawn came up with the solution: he reworked the mattes to include a very slight, 1 or 2 pixel black "glow" around Bing, which instantly helped him look more 3-D and really allowed him to blend into our set better.

Another fun trivia fact...in the 1962 show, Bing did not sing two lines from Little Drummer Boy: 'Mary nodded pa-rum-pa-pum-pum, The ox and lamb kept time pa-rum-pa-pum-pum.' He skipped those lines altogether, which created a huge problem for our musical director Tom Scott. The solution was to have Bing sing the first two lines of the song again to replace the missing ones."

Thanks to Gary, for such a detailed technical report.

None of us were prepared for what happened next. Immediately following the show's premiere on November 28th (the official title of the hour-long program is "The Nick At Nite Holiday Special", with other musical guests including Amy Grant & Vince Gill, Natalie Cole, and Sarah McLachlan), messages began pouring onto Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum's message boards at a furious pace - dozens each hour - from Clay Aiken and Bing Crosby fans alike, marveling at what we'd created. Many were younger Aiken fans in their teens and twenties, some had never heard of Bing Crosby, yet were so impressed with him, they decided to seek out more information on him. It's safe to say that Clay Aiken helped to sell a few Bing Crosby Christmas albums this year! As Steven Lewis pointed out, the day after the show premiered, the BC Internet Museum "received more messages in one day (110 at last count) than in any other single day in its 7 year history — more than twice as many, in fact". When all was said and done, there were over 200 messages just concerning this one performance! Nearly everyone was demanding the song's release on CD, flooding Clay's record label and management with e-mails, as well as the Nick At Nite network. A brief sampling of some of the comments:

From a Fan of Both: "Thanks to all of you who worked to make the duet happen. You should know that within the world of Clay's fans, the references to Bing came early on. Clay was labeled a "crooner" by many and thus came the expected comparisons. You should also know that Clay's fans are not just young folks, In fact, the largest contingent is well in the middle age demographic. The duet sounded magical to me. I truly believe that this young man is on the way to filling the void left when Bing was lost to us."

From Liz in Toronto: "I'm old enough to remember the Bing/Bowie duet, which I always loved. Have always missed Bing's voice since he left us. Now I'm a major Clayfan. I thought the Clay/Bing duet was outstanding. Just beautiful, moving and classic. I hope and pray that this is released as a single. It will sell like hotcakes! I would predict that it will be all over the radio probably not for this Christmas (it's too close now) but for next Christmas for sure. Wow. Congratulations, and a big thank you, to everyone who made this happen. And blessings on Bing and Clay, who gave us their beautiful voices.

From PJ: "I cannot express the words to describe the tears I was wiping away last night listening to the duet with Clay Aiken and Bing Crosby, what I can tell you is, it was a heartfelt spectacular performance. I so miss Bing, his wonderous awesome register."

From Celeste: "Absolutely the most moving performance by Clay Aiken singing with Bing Crosby that I've seen in a long, long time. My mother loved Bing and we always watched his Christmas specials. Now, to be able to hear him again with the angelic voice of Clay brought tears to my eyes. I hope this is released as a single and a video — more people need to hear it. Amazing! I'm sure Bing is smiling and very proud of Clay like we are."

From Mel: "There is simply not another singer like Bing Crosby. There won't ever be. Yet, I think they will say that down the road about young Aiken. Two one-of-a-kinds with amazing voices. If seeing Bing Crosby and Clay Aiken exposes more people to what singing should be, then I'm ready to launch that campaign."

From Donna: "Thank you, Greg, and everyone else responsible for putting Clay and Bing together in this special. Being a baby boomer, it wasn't Christmas until I heard or saw Bing Crosby singing Christmas carols. I still put my Christmas tree up while watching *White Christmas* and it's my New Year's Eve tradition to watch *Holiday Inn*. Bing was always a proponent for introducing new talent in his Christmas specials and I feel that, if he were alive today, Clay would have been on his Christmas show. Last night's special was the next best thing."

From Howard Crosby (Bing's nephew): "I very much liked Clay Aiken and his voice when my thirteen year old daughter got me to watch him last year on American Idol, and I was thrilled to see his duet with Uncle Bing last night on the Christmas special. It was fabulous. I would like to add my echo to all those who are now clamoring for a video and CD release of this magnificent effort. I'm sure it will be a huge hit....who knows, maybe even Number 39? You know, I can't help but think that if this duet gets released, Uncle Bing could maybe get his 397th chart song, or even his 39th #1! Clay's fans seem to be everywhere! At least a couple of Bing's earlier #1 hits were duets, including 'Sam's Song' with Gary Crosby and I think one of the Louis Armstrong duets."

From DonnaD: "Last night's Bing/Clay duet was absolutely magical — the blending of Clay's angelic tenor and Bing's heart-warming baritone was beyond words and I sat there practically breathless thru-out the entire song — I have rewound my tape countless times and yet I still want to hear it again. It was a dream come true for me, for my mom (who called me in tears after the performance) and it amazed my teen-aged daughter and her friends (who happened to be spending the night here) — they watched the tape over and over, in fact they made me stop taping right after the duet so they could watch it again !"

From Hobie Wilson/ Bing's Friends & Collectors Society: "Just saw the Bing/Aiken spot on NICK AT NITE. It was done with class. Those who devised and executed it are to be applauded. Anything that gets Bing noticed at Christmas time especially on television is much appreciated by this long time Crosby fan."

From Carol T.: "I was just blown away with the duet of Bing/Clay last night. I was watching at Christmas, 62 the" night Bing sang 'Little Drummer Boy' and ABC broadcast their first color show. My oldest son was 6 months old at the time. TV doesn't celebrate Christmas as they once did. So sad. All of my Christmas's as a child, were in the 40's and 50's, and Bing was always such a big part of it."

From Barbara: "I recorded the Nick at Nite special to replay for my parents today. I am 51 and my parents are 75 and 77. We all remember Bing fondly and I grew up listening to his music. As the duet ended, Mom had tears coming down her cheeks. She did manage to say, "There's my Bing and there's my new boy Clay. That was very nice."

From Nikki: "I am a little too young to remember Bing. But, after hearing him last night with Clay I was blown away. I went to the store today and bought a Bing Crosby Christmas Album - and it is great!"

From Betty: "This performance was especially meaningful to me because, for the first time, I was able to "share" Bing with my little daughter. We were watching the Nickelodeon special solely to see Clay, and I was so thrilled to see Clay perform a duet with BING! My daughter didn't know who Bing was (even though I had mentioned him to her before) and now, thanks to this special, she does!"

From Rebecca: "Just a note to say I am so excited to have just gone to I-Tunes and paid for and downloaded "The Christmas Collection, the Best of Bing Crosby"

From Becky: "Just checking in to say that upon perusing the wonderful website here for Mr Bing Crosby, I was astounded by the statistics of his success. The numbers of songs recorded, movies made etc. is simply amazing! This Clay fan recognizes that Mr Crosby is amazing and a worthy role model for Clay, I think his tenure in the entertainment industry is astounding and a hard one for anyone to match."

It's safe to say that after seeing this amazing out-pouring of love and affection for Bing, this has to be the

most rewarding project I've ever been involved with. I know Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall must feel the same way. Full credit must go to them. Their enthusiasm and belief in this project helped to bring Bing Crosby yet another Christmas classic. As Gary Tellalian said to me in an e-mail: "I'm really astounded as to the response to the Bing/Clay duet and I'm so happy that everyone was moved to tears. While it was never my intention to try to 'top' the Bing/Bowie duet, I think that Clay's amazing performance really put it over the top." I'm hopeful that by this Christmas Season, the duet will be released to a wider audience and will garner even more recognition for Bing, and, as I mentioned earlier, possibly another million-selling song and just maybe, another #1 hit on the pop charts. Can it be!

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: Fascinating stuff and well done Greg, Bob and Ron for helping this happen. During December the Bing/Clay duet was used in different circumstances on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live', a late-night network show on ABC. A clip of the Bing/Clay duet was shown and Tupac (the dead rapper) was transposed into it. Tupac of course cursed during the song and pretended to shoot Bing and Clay in the head. Rather unsavoury and lacking in taste was my opinion of it and this view was shared by many contributors to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

Incidentally, talking about the Museum, I was interested to read the following from Steven Lewis:

> *"If Thursday was Bingsday on NBC, December is Bingsmonth on the Internet. Every year since its 1996 birth, the Bing Crosby Internet Museum has peaked in terms of visitors in December. Each of the four weeks this month has seen at least 200,000 page requests from visitors, many of whom, no doubt, came here as part of the Clay invasion. Moreover, these numbers do not include bulletin board activity, which also set a record for messages in December. Bing's centennial year is ending with a bang."*

Steven recognised the fuss about the new American Idol competition by presenting the following on his home page in February.)

Our Man In Sydney

For several years it has been the custom of your Editor and his wife to spend their annual holiday on the other side of the Atlantic but this year, a last minute change of plan meant that it was the Indian Ocean which passed below the wings of our plane. Yes, we had a holiday in Australia visiting Sydney, Cairns, Ayers Rock and Perth.

The ICC's representative for Australia lives in a suburb of Sydney and it was a very surprised David Currington who had to field a phone call late one evening from me. David was rather surprised to say the least that I was there but the timing of my visit was opportune as David had arranged a Bing get-together the following Sunday at his home. He kindly picked us up from our hotel and we had a delightful day with David and some of our Australian members.

David lives at Turramurra and his home is surrounded by what is virtually a rain forest area containing many types of bird, reptile and animal. David's mother laid on a lovely meal which we ate out of doors (a novelty for us Brits!).

(l to r - back row), Malcolm Macfarlane, Thane Cooper, Alan Morton, Vic Bridger

front row: Rod Poynter, David Currington, John Dever

The conversation about Bing flowed throughout the day and we were treated to a showing of 'Two Plus Fours' and the Frank Sinatra Christmas Show from 1957 with Bing as guest. A special message was filmed to be shown at the Leeds meeting in October. Many rare Crosby items were played and as always these types of gathering are very stimulating and give one a real injection of Crosbyana. My thanks to David Currington for arranging a memorable day!

Malcolm Macfarlane

Celluloid Crosby

Keith Parkinson looks at one of Bing's biggest successes on celluloid.

It was just sixty years ago that cinema audiences began to appreciate that Bing could act as well as sing. He finished working on *Going My Way* in the early part of 1944 and by May of that year the film was being exhibited. With a running time of two hours and ten minutes it had to be good to hold audience attention. In fact it exceeded the expectations of critics, Crosbyphiles and the man in the street who went to the pictures every week for no other reason than he liked the movies. So it was hardly surprising that the BBC in the UK selected *Going My Way* as the film to show as a tribute to Bing three days after his death.

A film directed by Leo McCarey and starring Bing had been on the cards for some time. Both respected each others talent and it was only for the fact that McCarey was contracted to RKO that prevented a film partnership. When a deal was made between the studios the ultimate winners were the cinemagoers. That was because Bing agreed to star in *The Bells of St. Mary's* for RKO. That film went before the cameras in 1945 with McCarey directing.

Paramount budgeted *Going My Way* at around one million dollars. $650,000 was for production with the balance being for studio overheads. McCarey invested a modest amount in the film and profited to the extent of making more than double the Paramount budget. Bing received a flat fee of $125,000. Barry Fitzgerald was paid $12,500. On the film's initial North American release the film sold 37 million tickets and grossed $6.5 million in rentals. If you want to view the success of *Going My Way* against the most seen Hollywood film of all time then it has to measured against *Gone With the Wind* (1939). On its original release and subsequent theatrical re-issues, 200 million tickets to see *Gone With the Wind* were sold. As you'll read below, *GMW* was held in the same high esteem as *GWTW* by those in the film business.

Father O'Malley with Rise Stevens and Frank McHugh

Bing's regular movie songwriters Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen were usually called upon to tailor half a dozen songs to fit into a basic plot outline. For *Going My Way* they wrote just three numbers which Bing recorded. For one of them, they were asked to come up with a song for Bing which would be the equivalent of teaching the ten commandments in a rhythmic amusing manner. "It was some problem", Van Heusen recalled. "We struggled with it for days. In the end it was Bing who supplied the inspiration. We were at his house for dinner and one of the boys was acting up. Bing chastised him by saying, 'What do you want to be - a mule?' That sparked us off." The resultant song was, of course, "Swinging on a Star". It was the strongest song in the picture. The film's title song was not easily hummable whilst their third song was the obligatory romantic ballad, "The Day After Forever". It was the film's three traditional songs which Bing tackled that brought a lump to the throat as the film's plot unfolded. "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral" sends Barry Fitzgerald off to sleep to dream of his Irish mother, "Ave Maria" uses the Bob Mitchell Boys' Choir and Rise Stevens to help Bing project proper Father O'Malley reverence and "Silent Night" is used to good effect in inducing the young delinquents to sing with feeling.

The film scooped the pool when the Oscars were presented for 1944 releases. Bing won as best actor. Most notably, Leo McCarey won three Academy Awards for best film, direction and original story. Barry Fitzgerald won for best supporting actor. Frank Butler and Frank Cavett shared a statuette for best screenplay. That screenplay was one of the first to be published when Crown included it in "Best Film Plays of 1943-44".

It was only at the last minute that Bing decided to attend the award ceremony. Paramount discovered rather late in the day that Bing had no plans to go to Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard for the 8.00pm event. He put on a suit, although he did not bother with his hairpiece as the presentation was a radio event in those pre-television days. How unfortunate that the cameras were not present when Bing's pal Gary Cooper presented him with the Oscar because there was laughter whilst Bing was still onstage due to Bob Hope making faces behind Bing's back. In a later presentation staged for the newsreel cameras, Bing wears a hat as Gary Cooper hands him the Oscar.

There will always be those who cry foul over Academy Awards. In the mid-1990s critic Steve Vineberg revisited the 1945 Oscars for Empire magazine. He contended that Bing's award was not given for his acting and that Charles Boyer should have won for his performance in *Gaslight.* He rationalises his verdict by writing:

> By the time he (Bing) won for the bland *Going My Way* he had been a movie star for a decade and a half. His

Oscar was a tribute to his popularity just as Barry Fitzgerald's supporting Oscar for the same movie was an acknowledgement of years of steady service - the industry version of a gold watch. Fitzgerald didn't have stiff competition; Crosby, on the other hand, beat out Charles Boyer, a personality actor who really could act.

I'm not sure what a personality actor is but I'm prepared to argue that Bing is as strong a personality actor as Boyer. Barry Fitzgerald's long service in Hollywood stretched back a full seven years, by the way.

Going My Way received more honours than any other Crosby picture. These half dozen examples list the organisations which regarded the film as the best release of 1944:

1. New York Film Critics
2. Golden Globe
3. Photoplay magazine "Gold Medal"
4. Screenguild Magazine Poll
5. Leatherneck (official magazine of U.S. Marine Corps)
6. Film Daily

From the evidence which follows there is no doubt that 1945 was the year when Bing Crosby became to be regarded as an actor as well as a light entertainer. His acting performance came in for critical praise from many sources. Perhaps the highest accolade is that awarded by an actor's peers. The best actor Oscar is voted for by fellow actors who are members of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. A higher membership of actors than with AMPAS was registered with the Screen Players Union in 1945 when a ballot of 5,000 members resulted in Bing being voted as the outstanding actor of 1944. *Look* magazine held their fourth Film Achievement Award ceremony in February, 1945. The master of ceremonies was Bob Hope. He presented Bing with a gold plaque for "Number One Entertainer of the Year". In Los Angeles, Harrison Carroll wrote for the Evening Herald Express, "It [*Going My Way*] contains an amazingly simple and convincing performance by Bing Crosby". Britain's foremost film critic at the time of the film's release was Dilys Powell. She wrote in her Sunday Times column, "Bing Crosby, by a performance both sincere and endearing, once again shows what a good actor he can be". Also in the UK Picturegoer magazine readers voted Bing best actor of the year.

On 27th July, 1944, Glenn Miller's Orchestra (augmented by a string section) performed at the charity premiere of *Going My Way* at the Plaza cinema in London. The good cause which benefited was the Stage Door Welfare Fund. That would ultimately go towards opening the Stage Door Canteen at 201, Piccadilly, in mid-August of that year.

If you've seen *Going My Way* it requires no further endorsement from me. The best way to wrap up this article is to quote from two of the most glowing reviews I had read for any Hollywood film. Archer Winsten wrote in the *New York Post*, "The beauty and joy of *Going My Way* spring from the treatment of human relationships". And W.R. Wilkerson had this to say in *The Hollywood Reporter*, "There is no doubt that when the negative of *Going My Way* has been worn through the printing of thousands of release prints in years to come, this picture will accumulate the largest gross take of any picture of its day with the possible exception of *Gone With the Wind* and it's a good bet that the McCarey-Paramount clicker may even outdo the Selznick-MGM big grosses."

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith Parkinson continues his alphabetical look at Bing's film career.

OLCOTT, CHAUNCEY (1860-1932). Lyricist. He takes co-writer's credit with George Graff Jr. for the words to "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" which Bing sang in *Top o' the Morning* (1949). Although he was born in Buffalo, N.Y., spent several years appearing on the London stage in light operas and died in Monte Carlo, Olcott specialised in writing sentimental Irish tearjerkers. Considering his early life saw him touring the States in a minstrel show, that showbusiness detour seemed to have had little influence on the likes of his ballads such as "My Wild Irish Rose" and "Mother Machree".

OLD DAN TUCKER Song. An "authentic" minstrel song from *Dixie* (1943). Bing's character in the film - Dan Emmett - actually composed this song for inclusion in his minstrel show and it is in such a setting that Bing sings it as a member of a quartet comprising Billy de Wolfe, Eddie Foy Jnr. and Lynne Overman.

OLD GLORY Song. This patriotic salute to the stars and stripes was written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen for the World War II morale booster *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942). Nothing could follow Bing's flag waving rendition in the film which is why Paramount wisely made it the film's finale.

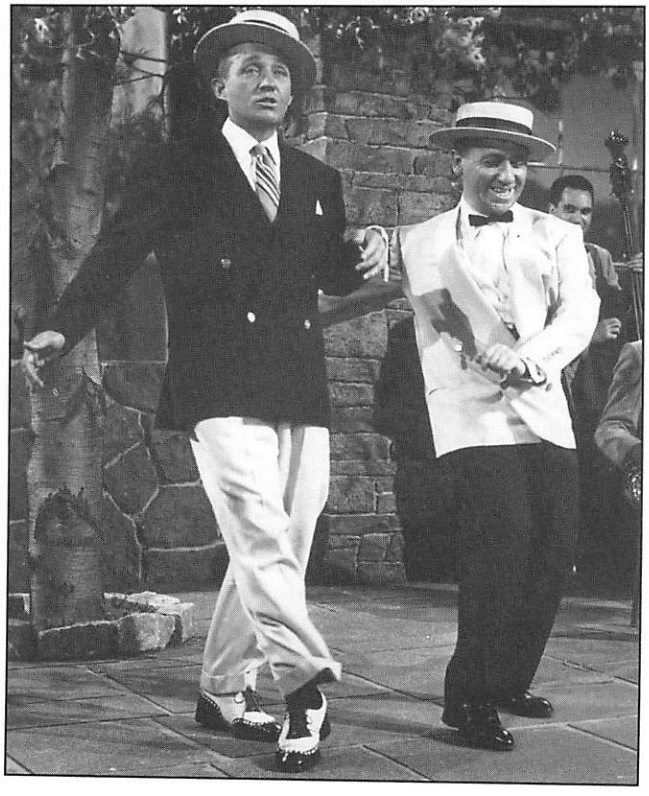
THE OLD MAN Song. In *White Christmas* (1954) the old man in question is Major General Waverly, played by Dean Jagger. When the film opens, Waverly is leaving the armed forces and Bing and Danny Kaye sing this Irving Berlin composition by way of an affectionate farewell.

OLSEN, MORONI (1889-1954) Character actor. Playing John Blair, Olsen ensured that *If I Had My Way* (1940) reached a satisfactory conclusion by making a loan to the cafe that provided work for several vaudevillians. Olsen's physical bulk helped him to secure his movie debut in the part of Porthos for the 1935 version of *The Three Musketeers*. For the next twenty years he was seldom out of work for more than a couple of weeks. He could play villain, best friend, prominent citizen or historical character. In that latter capacity he was John Knox in *Mary of Scotland* (1936), Robert E. Lee in *Santa Fe Trail* (1940) and Sam Houston in *Lone Star* (1952).

OLSON, NANCY (1928-) Actress. Signed by Paramount in 1949, she proved to be a good investment when she was nominated for an Oscar as "best supporting actress" the following year for her role in *Sunset Boulevard.* Nancy Olson fitted the mould of Bing's leading ladies during the second half of the Crosby film career so it is surprising that she only shared screen time with him twice. She was Bing's girlfriend in *Mr. Music* (1950) and the film's happy ending had them both walking away together after the usual on-again/off-again plot complications surrounding their relationships. Bing and Nancy were reunited in 1955 when she was in the first made-for-television movie: *High Tor.* By then she had decided to retire from acting to spend more time with her first husband, songwriter Alan Jay Lerner. That marriage lasted seven years until 1957 and she subsequently married Alan Livingston, president of Capitol Records. Her fresh faced looks made her the ideal young mum for Disney's family films and she was ideally cast in *Pollyanna* (1960), *The Absent Minded Professor* (1961) *Son of Flubber* (1963) and *Snowball Express* (1972). She still accepts the occasional mature role.

ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY Song. A snatch of this Rudyard Kipling song is included in the "I Positively Refuse to Sing" medley which Bing delivers on board ship in *We're Not Dressing* (1934). It became popular in Frank Sinatra's repertoire in the late 1950s when he recorded a version notable for its abrupt ending. That version was denied a UK release following objections from the Kipling estate. However they eventually found no offence in Bing's recording (again as part of a medley) for his first sing-a-long album for Warner Bros. Records.

ON THE SENTIMENTAL SIDE Song. This was the main Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen love ballad from *Doctor Rhythm* (1938). The composition appealed to the jazz fraternity and was recorded by the likes of Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday.



Bing and Ben Lessy put over the "Ten-Ten-Ten".

ON THE TEN-TEN-TEN FROM TEN-TEN-TENNESSEE Song. *Just For You* (1952) contains a scene where Bing goes to enrol his daughter in an exclusive school. He meets an orchestra leader pal and the two sing this inappropriate for the occasion Leo Robin-Harry Warren song. Ben Lessy joins in the vocal both on film and Decca disc. Most films can accommodate one novelty song. In *Just For You,* "Zing a Little Zong" was successful, with "Ten-Ten-Ten" running a distant second, particularly when sung out of context on record.

ONCE AND FOR ALWAYS Song. Ten years after *Doctor Rhythm* (1938) Burke and Van Heusen were still writing one love ballad per picture for Bing. "Once and For Always" was the romantic song for *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949). Bing and Rhonda Fleming sing it twice as a duet. They went on to make the Decca recording released to tie in with the film.

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON Song. Bing sings this to Carole Lombard when the pair are marooned on an island in the 1934 Paramount Picture *We're Not Dressing*. Mack Gordon and Harry Revel were the writers.

ONCE MORE THE BLUE AND THE WHITE Song. This is something of a curiosity as a film related composition. Towards the beginning of *Mr. Music* (1950) it is sung as a college song by a group of students. It is not a particularly memorable Burke-Van Heusen effort but was obviously deemed worth a Crosby vocal for Decca Records. Perhaps the justification for making the recording was so that Bing could then go on to dedicate it to Gonzaga University.

ONCE UPON A LONG AGO Song. The songs from the television film *High Tor* grow on you even though that presentation failed to provide any hit recordings at the time Decca released a soundtrack album. Maxwell Anderson and Arthur Schwartz wrote the songs and "Once Upon a Long Ago" is my favourite Bing recording from that score. Julie Andrews also gave a solo rendition of the song.

ONE MORE CHANCE Short film. This was the second of six Mack Sennett featurettes which systematically introduced Bing to his radio and record audiences. The title is an abbreviated form of the song "Just One More Chance", which Bing chose for his nation-wide radio debut in September of 1931. *One More Chance* received a Stateside release in November of that year.

ONE, TWO BUTTON YOUR SHOE Song. Inspired by an old nursery rhyme, this Johnny Burke-Arthur Johnston composition was one of four strong songs that the duo wrote for Bing to sing in *Pennies From Heaven* (1936). The song's arrangement was by John Scott Trotter, who was receiving his first film assignment courtesy of Johnny Burke.

ONLY A GYPSY KNOWS Song. In *Doctor Rhythm* (1938) Bing shares the stage with Beatrice Lillie as the two duet this Johnny Burke-James Monaco composition. Bing is in drag to comply with plot requirements and the song was written to suit the Beatrice Lillie character of Lorelei Dodge-Blodgett. If you wanted to hear it again as a reminder of the *Doctor Rhythm* score, Jasmine Records obliged by including it on CD for Volume 2 of "Going Hollywood".

ONLY FOREVER Song. One of the strongest Johnny

Burke-James V. Monaco film songs composed for Bing. It was sung by Bing and Mary Martin in *Rhythm on the River* (1940) where it comprised an integral part of the plot when it was used as collateral security for a loan. Bing saw it as a sufficiently important part of his film song legacy to re-record it for his musical autobiography.

OUR BIG LOVE SCENE Song. This is the song which wraps up *Going Hollywood* (1933). Bing sings it on being re-united with Marion Davies. It was written by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown.

OUT OF NOWHERE Song. Bing sang this Edward Heyman-Johnny Green composition around the time he was finding his feet in Hollywood. Most cinemagoers had their first glimpse of the vocal-soloing Crosby when it was the opening number in *I Surrender Dear* (1931) which was the first Mack Sennett short to gain a theatrical release. That same year it was used in a feature film when Bing and the Rhythm Boys were shoehorned into *Confessions of a Co-ed.* Bing sings it without the Boys in a scene at a school dance.

OUT OF THIS WORLD Film. I have never seen this film. It has not had a television presentation in the UK and it was not re-issued following its initial release. The fact that it appears in Maltin's "Movie and Video" guide is an indication that it has been screened at sometime or other on television in North America. I cannot trace a release on tape or DVD. The Paramount poster advertising the film called it "the laugh-a-minute lowdown on the birth of swoon." But then they would, wouldn't they? I think it more likely that Leslie Halliwell was nearer the mark when he described it as "a very mild comedy." Bing is heard but not seen in the film. He provides the singing voice of Eddie Bracken so that Bracken can be credible as a singing telegram messenger who has the ability to attract the girls in the same way as Frank Sinatra was doing at the time. Bracken acknowledges Bing's contribution at the film's end by looking directly into the camera and saying, "Thanks, Bing." So how come Bing involved himself in a fairly routine comedy? It was not at the behest of his studio because Paramount saw it unworthy of his involvement. The answer seems to lie in the brief appearance of Bing's four sons. Each of them is given one line of dialogue. For that it is said that they received $50,000. Each!

OUT OF THIS WORLD Song. Written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen for the film of the same name. It seems that Bing's version was not memorable enough to promote the film by gaining radio airplays although both Jo Stafford and Tommy Dorsey had hits with it. Bing recorded the song for Decca at the same time as "Let's Take the Long Way Home", a far more listener friendly composition.

OVERMAN, LYNNE (1887-1943) Character actor who occasionally landed a major role. The slightly built Overman was a jockey turned vaudevillian who came to the movies via the legitimate theatre. He appeared in three Crosby films in roles that cast him as an individual operating on the fringes of showbusiness. In *She Loves Me Not* (1934) he was the publicity agent, in *Two for Tonight*, released the following year, he had a more substantial part as Harry Kling, this time a theatrical agent, and in *Dixie* (1943) he played Whitlock, a minstrel. In 1942 he was one of dozens of Paramount contract players who showed their faces in *Star Spangled Rhythm.* His final film appearance was in *The Desert Song*, released the year following his death. His time in films was exactly ten years, during which time he probably averaged an appearance every six weeks or so. He was more likely to be a friendly cynic than a villain and on three occasions he played the lead role in 'B' pictures: *Nobody's Baby* (1937), *Persons in Hiding* and *Death of a Champion*, both 1939.

OWEN, REGINALD (1887-1972) Character actor and sometimes leading man. Reginald Owen was born in Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire in the UK and graduated from an acting academy to make his mark on the English stage before appearing on Broadway in 1924. By the end of the twenties his English accent made him an obvious choice to play gentlemen of distinction and nobility. His one Bing film was *Here is My Heart* (1934) in which he played Prince Vladimir, a Russian noble who was an hotel doorman at the conclusion of the film. Prior to *Here is My Heart* he had played Louis XV twice and later in his career he was Emperor Franz Josef in *Florian* (1940) and Louis XV again in the Bob Hope starrer *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1946). The offer of character parts petered out and by the 1960s Owen had more or less retired. Rather than accept roles in low budget films he was selective enough to make sure he took quality assignments. Hence his last three films: *Mary Poppins* (1964) *Rosie* (1967) and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971).

OWENS, HARRY (1902-1986) Composer, author and bandleader. Owens only had one song featured in a Bing Crosby film. That was "Sweet Leilani" which was included in *Waikiki Wedding* (1937). It went on to win the Oscar for the best song of 1937. Born in Nebraska, Owens formed his Royal Hawaiians Orchestra in Hawaii and brought them to the USA. That move started the late 1930s vogue for Hawaiian music. He made one movie himself, *Song of the Islands* (1942) for which he wrote the score. He appeared on television in its early days and his Hollywood based show ran for ten years.

PADRE, THE This was the original title for *Going My Way* (1944). Leo McCarey, who directed the film, thought up the story and decided to change the title when he had a chance encounter with a rain drenched serviceman who was thumbing a lift and asked McCarey, "Going my way?"

Keith Parkinson

BING AND I

John Sims of Vancouver in British Columbia recalls a special meeting with Bing in 1947.

I first spied Bing Crosby on the sun-lit steps of a small Roman Catholic church in the Canadian Rocky Mountain resort town of Jasper, Alberta. He was in the company of two attractive young ladies, summer waitresses at Jasper Park Lodge where he was staying while preparing to play in the Totem Pole Tournament, one of his favorite golfing events. It was Sunday morning, August 31, 1947. The qualifying round of the six-day tournament would begin next day.

I tried to catch his attention as he and the girls descended the steps, but they disappeared from sight when mobbed by a small group of locals, all vying to get close to the great crooner and say something to him, like "hello..Bing, how are you?," to which he reciprocated in his cheerful, carefree manner. After chatting briefly with a few in the crowd, Bing moved towards an empty black

auto parked on the street before the church. The girls and, of course, the crowd followed. As for me, I was still attempting to catch his attention.

* * * * * * * * * * *

I had trained to Jasper the previous day from Alberta, capital city of Edmonton, two to three hours to the east, beyond the mountains and on a flat plain through which flowed the mighty North Saskatchewan River, its steep banks rising hundreds of feet to the sky. I worked at the Edmonton Bulletin, now defunct, where I was a greenhorn cub reporter and naturally wanted to make a good impression.

"Mr. Oliver," I had said to the city editor late Friday afternoon, "I could go to Jasper this weekend to interview Bing Crosby at the Totem Pole golf tournament." Silence.

John Oliver was roly-poly short, ruddy-cheeked, rapidly balding, inclined to kindness and imperturbability, who had survived the trenches of World War One and returned to Canada with a stiff leg but a flexible spirit. I suspect he hired me so that I would stop climbing the long flight of stairs to the editorial room week after week to pester him about giving me a job. When a 17-year-old wants to be a big-time reporter he does not easily take "no" or "not at this time" as final words on the subject. So one day John Oliver wheeled around in his chair, his stiff leg horizontal, and faced me. He sighed, smiled slightly and gave in. He instructed me to go to the library, take out certain books on journalism, read the damn things, and report to work the next Monday morning. Now, only a few weeks later and after writing countless "training program" obituaries, I wanted him to dispatch me to Jasper on my first out-of-town assignment.

"Sports is giving it full coverage," he said.

"But I was thinking about a feature angle."

"Like what?"

"Well....." I frantically searched my brain for an angle. Nothing. Finally I said, somewhat sheepishly, "maybe I could go on my own hook and try to interview him."

John Oliver's ears perked up; the man always liked initiative.

"Tell you what, " he said. "If by some miracle you get an interview and we print it, the paper will handle the expenses. Okay?"

"Okay!"

The truth of it was that I wanted meet my idol more than anything, story or no story. Anyway, a reporter worth his salt can always find some kind of story laying around somewhere. If I couldn't interview a famous singer, I could write a piece about how I was unable to interview a famous singer. Next morning I boarded the westbound Canadian National Railways transcontinental for Jasper where I checked into one of the hotels near the train depot. Later that evening I found myself in the inn's tavern from which I coin-telephoned Jasper Park Lodge and asked to speak to Mr. Bing Crosby. Just like that! I attempted to sound casually cool, being the representative of a Big City Newspaper and all that. In a few seconds a voice came on the line. I gulped before popping the question.

"Mr. Crosby?" I asked. My heart pounded.

"No," said the voice," this is Mr. Crosby's manager. Can I help you?"

"Oh, oh! Headed off at the pass; blocked before I could make the kick. I told him who I was, and my business.

"Just a minute," he said pleasantly, which was a surprise, because I knew managers and agents for famous bodies were tyrants, 400-pound defensive tackles obstructing the way.

"Mr. Sims?" the tyrant returned in a pleasant voice, "Mr. Crosby would be pleased to see you. Could you meet him tomorrow after morning mass at the Roman Catholic Church? About nine. He'll pick you up in his car. That fine with you?"

What could I say but fine and thank you very much. I floated back to the table and finished my draft.

****

Bing Crosby had reached the driver's side and was opening the door when I shouted something or other of identification. He spotted me. "Get in," he called out across the roof of the car. The waitress in the back seat opened the door and in I climbed. I peered out the windows at the envious faces peering in and tried to act as nonchalant as was possible under the circumstance, considering that there was a pretty young thing in the back seat with me, another up front, and the great groaner himself, at the wheel. He turned the key, the motor purred, and we moved off.

"Glad you could make it," he said to me and reached back over the seat to shake my hand. Then he introduced me to the two girls. He suggested I conduct my interview over lunch and on the putting green where he wanted to sharpen his putting strokes for the tournament. Then, like a scene out of one of his movies, he started to sing and urged the girls and me to join him.

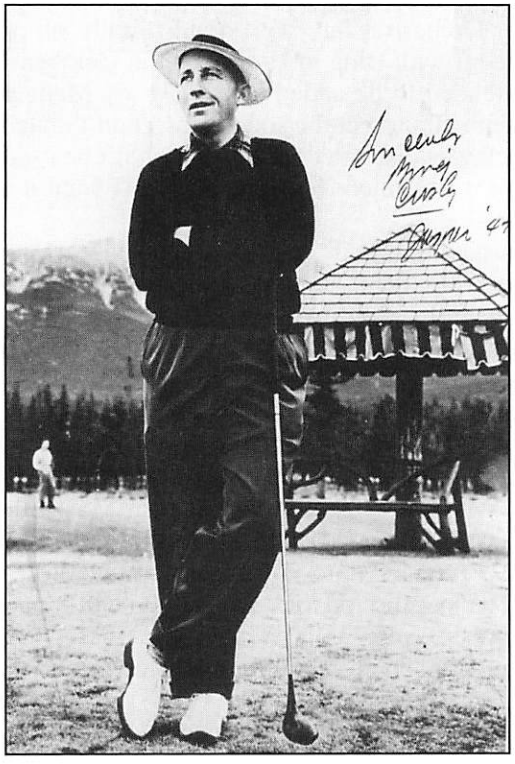
"Who wants to do the harmony?" he asked. The girl up front volunteered. The famous voice, deep and resonant, and carrying a twinkle, began to fill the automobile. I can still see the back and side of his head, his hat characteristically perched at a jaunty angle on his thinning head of hair, and his trademark ears thrust out defiantly. There we were, two waitresses and one green reporter warbling our hearts out with the great man. Me, singing with Bing Crosby! But it was such a natural thing; not contrived or obligatory to please, but a delightful sharing of friendship among the four of us. And lustily we sang and chattered all the way to the Lodge, a trip of about half an eternity.

Bing dropped the girls in the main area of the Lodge, then drove to his cabin where he ordered in lunch for the three of us — himself, his manager and me. I was of course enthralled by what was happening to me — a junior league reporter getting the royal treatment by his idol. Lunch over, Bing and I casually walked to the putting green where, between his putts, I completed my questioning, such as it was for a kid of 17. He straightened up to hail the Lodge's official photographer strolling by, camera in hand.

"How about a shot?" Bing asked me. It was something I should have thought of. "How would you like to set it up?"

"Oh," I said, "I think a shot of you putting." The photographer arrived with his press camera. "How would you like it Mr. Crosby?"

"Oh, a shot of me putting," he said, winking at me, "and one of Mr. Sims and me together."



I was touched no end, a true fan. So the photographer shot Bing as he putted and suggested I move in for a shot of both of us. Along the way I lost the treasured photo, not that I minded losing it that much, but that my folks lost the opportunity to brag, with the evidence in their hands, about their son and Bing Crosby! In about half an hour the interview was over. We shook hands, he kidded me about something or other, then returned to putting. Walking off, I wheeled to have another look at the great man. He was hunched over the putter, the pipe clenched between his teeth, the hat shading his balding noggin. He caught me glancing over his way, waved and resumed what he was up to.

I later joined the gallery for Bing's practice round on a course dotted with stately Douglas firs and other shrubbery, and ringed all around by majestic snow-capped peaks of the rugged Rocky Mountains. A postcard setting. The high-altitude air was invigorating, the sun brilliant. Bing played effortlessly, scoring par on most of the holes. Finally, at the eighteenth, he birdied.

"Tweet, tweet," he joked as his tournament pals groaned in mock disgust.

"Nice," said one of the players, "but this ain't the tournament, Bing. You've had your birdies for the duration."

Bing laughed. "Wanna bet? He pointed to his caddy. "Tell you what, he gets new suits for every other birdie I score in the tournament."

"Sure, sure," the man said. He turned to the caddie, "But if I were you, kid, I'd hold on to the suit you picked up today."

In the qualifying round next day, Bing shot a 74, made the cut and won easily in the opening round, Tuesday September 2. In the second round match next day, he was up against Vancouver's Matt Berry whom he defeated easily. He also dropped a birdie on the eighteenth. A second suit for the caddie; another birdie and the kid will be clothed in sartorial splendor. In the third round another Vancouver player, Norman Wilkinson, goes down to Bing. Next day, Friday Sept. 5, the crooner wins his semi-final match against Carl Haymond of Tacoma. He's on a roll.

It's the last day, Saturday September 6. About a thousand fans show up to watch their singing idol tee off against Gordon Verley. The two men go head to head, matching each other on nearly every hole. The air crackles with anticipation as the pair drive, chip and putt toward the final eighteenth hole. They tee off the seventeenth dead even, setting up the drama that's to follow on the eighteenth. It's anybody's game. Verley is on the green in two. He tries for the birdie, but misses. The ball is only about a foot from the hole, virtually a given par. Bing's second shot, however, went off the green and lays about 30 feet from the hole. Worse still, he couldn't see the pin from his position under the shade of a massive Douglas fir; he was also distracted by a youngster noisily fidgeting behind him. He assumed his stance, then suddenly broke it with a good-humored offer to change positions with the squirming lad. That little bit of jollity drew titters from the tensed-up gallery which relaxed, as did Bing. He addressed the ball once again, then almost nonchalantly chipped it into the hole. An early Tiger Woods tour de force.

The gallery hooted and clapped. Varley, thinking he was secure with at least a tie, shook his head in disbelief, but recovered to congratulate his opponent on the shot. Bing, a bit surprised himself, shook Varley's hand warmly and apologized for being "so damn lucky."

The caddy got his suits — one for the practice-round birdie, the next in the second round, and the third on the eighteenth. As for Bing, he took off soon after the big game to bag another kind of big game — moose, roaming the forested foothills of the Rockies in areas outside the protected wildlife refuge of Jasper Park.

Although he's not with us in the flesh, Bing's spirit of givingness and natural exuberance for life is still here. How could that go? It's still fresh with me. Oh yes, John Oliver printed my little story and even put my name over it.

So it goes.

John Sims

(Editor: What a nice story. Bing's kindness to so many people over the years was indeed remarkable.)

More about Gonzaga (2)

As mentioned in our last issue, we asked a number of celebrities to write a letter for display at the Gonzaga celebration last May and we have pleasure in reproducing a few more of these heart-warming messages.

First of all, here's what **Rhonda Fleming** had to say

in a letter she had addressed to Kathryn Crosby.

Regretfully I am unable to join you and the family for the celebration of the "Bing Crosby Centenary" in May - I would love to have been a part of it and I'm sure the fans will be in heaven! I have so many happy memories of having the chance to work with Bing in "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" - not only co-starring for the first time with him, but starring above the title since he never wanted to star alone! What a break for a relative newcomer. Bing and Tay Garnett, our director, chose me over many girls who had tested for the role of Princess Alisande - and it began a whole new chapter in my career - going from black and white character roles to starring in many Technicolor films.

Bing was a delight to work with and did everything he could to upstage himself and make sure I was being treated well - and to be able to sing with him was such a thrill, although he had me sing down one whole octave from my trained soprano voice to be able to sing with him in his key - that was a challenge.

When I'm asked about my favorite films I always say "working with Bing Crosby was one of the highlights of my life and my career."

Much love to you Kathryn, and your family and to all his fans!

Rhonda Fleming

Gloria Jean was another who wrote.

I look back on my career as one of great memories, working with talented actors and actresses. Bing Crosby was the most memorable. I was 14 years old when we made 'If I Had My Way'. He not only gave me good advice, but helped me as an actress. His singing was so beautiful, it was a pleasure to sing with him.

Bing Crosby is an inspiration to all of us, and will always be remembered.

Gloria Jean

Finally, for this time around, there was a lovely hand-written letter from **Mary Frances Crosby**:

To Dad's Friends and Fans

I just wanted to say how sorry I am that I can't be there. However with a new baby & a 3 year old, I hope you'll understand.

Have a wonderful weekend & I want to say thank you to Dad's fans for being so supportive of his music & his values.

I'm there in spirit & again, Thank You.

With Very Best Wishes,

Mary Crosby

We shall have more letters in our next issue.

White Christmas - the 1976 version

A query on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum brought forth an interesting explanation from Ken Barnes which we reproduce below.

"Bing's 1976 version of "White Christmas" was only 30 seconds long. A half-chorus, not with the Pete Moore Orchestra but with Paul Smith on piano. I recorded it with Bing in Hollywood in October, 1976. It was intended to be added to the Crosby Medley on the Palladium album but the sounds just didn't match and so the track was discarded. Since it couldn't be used for the purpose it was intended for, Bing didn't want it released at all.

I asked Bing if he would consider re-recording "White Christmas" on the "Seasons" album. He said "Why would I want to do that?" I told him that it would give the world a new stereo version with a modern orchestration. He smiled and shook his head. " I'd only be competing with myself," he said." And in any case, I doubt if MCA would ever agree to it." He was, of course, referring to an old contract he had signed in which he agreed never to re-record any of his Decca titles. That contract was changed by Basil Grillo in 1949 and any post 1950 tracks were no problem. But, for "Seasons" we did get permission to re-record "June In January" and "September Song."

I hope this helps clear up a mystery.

Ken Barnes

(Editor: And talking of the Decca contract...)

The MCA Legal Battle

We don't know too much about the progress of the ongoing legal dispute between the Crosby estate and MCA but we have seen the following in various publications in recent months.

Ruling – Bing Crosby
California Court of Appeal No. B167458
HLC Properties Limited, et al.
v. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County, et al.

A. Background Facts

Petitioner HLC Properties, Limited (HLC), is a limited partnership formed in 1980 for the purpose of managing the entertainment empire created by Harry Lillis Crosby, professionally known as Bing Crosby (Crosby), who died in 1977. Crosby's personal representative and widow transferred to HLC his interests in various record masters, television programs, motion pictures, radio programs, music compositions, music publishing agreements, literary works, and the contract rights related to those interests, as well as the right of publicity. The general partner of HLC, Hillsborough Productions, Inc., was to manage the operations, including making all creative and business decisions about the interests transferred to HLC.

Before Crosby's death, the business interests transferred to HLC were owned by Crosby but managed and operated by a staff of employees that had managed Crosby's holdings for decades. Basil Grillo (Grillo), the manager and accountant who had run Crosby's organization for over 30 years, said that when he first

began working for Crosby in 1945 or 1946, the Crosby operation was already so extensive that six months passed before he even met Crosby. That operation included musicians, singers, writers and agents, all of whom were involved in the creative and business aspects of records, motion pictures and radio and television programs. It also had interests in other fields. At times, business activities operated within formal entities. For example, Bing Crosby Productions was engaged in motion picture and television production. Bing Crosby Enterprises, Inc., was formed, but was later liquidated in the 1950's. The various businesses and entertainment interests of Crosby generally were managed under the name "Bing Crosby Enterprises," but that operation was not a formal entity.

It appears that any formal business entity that Crosby utilized for his operations was dissolved or otherwise liquidated, for there is no suggestion of the existence of such an entity at his death. There is no indication of how or in what manner those entities were terminated—whether by a formal dissolution or informal liquidation. Bing Crosby Enterprises continued operating after Crosby's death, and Crosby's personal representative continued to employ its staff and maintain its offices. In 1981, the probate court approved the transfer of the entertainment assets managed by Bing Crosby Enterprises to HLC, which, according to the HLC Properties, Ltd. Limited Partnership Agreement, was to "engage in the business of managing and controlling the property and rights."

B. The current dispute

On July 31, 2000, HLC filed a lawsuit against real parties in interest MCA Records, Inc., GRP Records, Inc., UMG Recordings, Inc., MCA, Inc., and Universal Studios, Inc. (collectively MCA), alleging they had underpaid royalties due on several recording contracts Crosby had entered into with MCA's predecessors in interest. In the course of pretrial discovery, MCA propounded a demand for production of documents to HLC. HLC responded by producing some documents but withholding others that it listed in a privilege log as containing protected attorney-client communications. MCA did not file a motion to compel production of the documents withheld. MCA later issued a third-party deposition subpoena for production of documents to Crosby's former lawyers, who produced some documents, but HLC's attorney submitted a "supplemental privilege log," adding three documents to the original list. MCA did not file a motion to compel production of those additional documents.

Eight days before trial, MCA issued a subpoena to HLC, requiring it to produce at trial, 59 of the documents listed by HLC in its privilege logs. MCA notified HLC that it believed HLC had no privilege with respect to attorney-client communications in those 59 documents. At the final status conference in the case, MCA alerted the trial court that it had issued the subpoena and that the parties did not agree on whether the documents sought were privileged. The trial court gave the parties two days to file briefs on the issue. On the first day of trial, the court considered the enforceability of the subpoena in view of the attorney-client privilege objections. The trial court held that the privilege did not apply because the court interpreted the Evidence Code to provide that the privilege of an individual is terminated once the estate is wound up and the personal representative discharged. The trial court did not recognize Bing Crosby Enterprises as a holder of the privilege. A petition followed and the California appeals court has now ruled that the attorney-client privilege is "inherited" in California by a successor company.

HLC argued that it was the successor to Bing Crosby Enterprises, an unincorporated entity through which Crosby had done business. HLC claimed that as successor to this company, it should be entitled to assert any rights that Bing Crosby Enterprises could have asserted. The appeals court agreed.

The court said that Bing Crosby Enterprises was simply a business staff assembled by Crosby to operate his entertainment interests. The court noted that §953 of the Evidence Code provides that the holder of the attorney-client privilege can be a "successor, assign, trustee in dissolution, or any similar representative of a firm, association, organization, partnership, business trust, corporation, or public entity that is no longer in existence." The court found that Bing Crosby Enterprises was an "organization" within the meaning of this provision, and that as its successor, HLC was entitled to claim the privilege.

Then on December 29, 2003 we read the following on the Law.com site:

Battle Over Dead Crooner's Attorney-Client Privilege

A white Christmas of sorts arrived Tuesday for several major recording companies when the California Supreme Court agreed to hear a significant attorney-client case involving the Bing Crosby estate.

The companies had petitioned for review after Los Angeles' 2nd District Court of Appeal ruled in September that HLC Properties Ltd., which handles Crosby's entertainment kingdom, qualified under the state Evidence Code for the deceased crooner's attorney-client privilege. The recording companies had made a demand for documents after HLC sued them in 2000, alleging at least $16 million in underpaid royalties on several recording contracts Crosby had entered into before his 1977 death. HLC had refused, saying it qualified as a successor to Crosby's attorney-client privilege. The 2nd District agreed, saying that "organizations" are listed along with guardians, conservators, successors and others that the state Evidence Code defines as the holder of a deceased person's attorney-client privilege.

"We hold that Bing Crosby Enterprises constituted an 'organization,' and therefore HLC, as successor to that business 'organization,' is the holder of the privilege," Justice Richard Mosk wrote for the court.

In seeking review with the high court, attorneys for MCA Records Inc., GRP Records Inc., UMG

Recordings Inc., MCA Inc. and Universal Studios Inc. argued that the appeal court ruling has "revolutionized" the law in California and has "radically" expanded the concept of a successor. Gregory Smith, a partner at L.A.'s Irell & Manella, wrote that the court of appeal has "held that an individual, by taking the simple step of carrying on personal business activities with the assistance of others, may transform him or herself into an alter ego 'organization' that separately is the holder of what otherwise would be the individual's attorney-client privilege." Smith further argued that the issue takes on even more importance because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1998 that under federal law an individual's attorney-client privilege continues indefinitely after death.

"The court of appeal's decision," he wrote, "essentially conforms California law to federal law notwithstanding California's diametrically opposite statutory scheme." HLC's lawyers opposed review by the Supreme Court by arguing that the recording companies had magnified the importance of the lower court ruling — which, they said, was "narrowly tailored to the facts of this case." "All the court decided was [that] HLC Properties Ltd., an organization, was the successor in interest to the Bing Crosby Enterprises, the Bing Crosby organization," Howard Miller, a partner in L.A.'s Girardi & Keese, wrote. "That the attorney-client privilege may pass from one organization to a successor organization is not contested by the petition for review.

"And whether any entity is an organization," he added, "is inherently a question of fact unique to each case."

The Supreme Court's justices granted review unanimously and the decision was due by February 13. We had not heard any more when we went to press.

Editor's comment

I was a little surprised about the vagueness of the initial background. Surely some of Bing's staff are still around and can furnish details. Don't his old legal and tax advisers have files?

It has been suggested that Bing's contracts with Decca contained a clause prohibiting him from re-recording songs (already made for Decca) for other companies. The penalties were draconian if Bing broke that condition and it may well be that the legal advisers for HLC Properties are afraid that if HLC approve any CD issues containing radio versions of such tracks that they will be in breach of these old contracts. Perhaps this is the reason for the difficulties in issuing new albums. I wonder if it would help if we issued a copy of Wig's discography to the legal advisers? They would then have details of Bing's work for MCA and its predecessors.

We await further information with interest and suspect that the only ones to really win will be the lawyers— the cynics would say "as usual."

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Don Rayno, Cary, NC 27511, USA

I wanted to express my gratitude to Bill Piccone and *BING* for the review of my book, *Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music,* Volume 1, that appeared in the recent issue of BING, and for all the kind words. I also am grateful for the discographical queries that followed the review. Discographical research is typically an ongoing process, and these kinds of questions and discussions can only be beneficial in establishing the greatest accuracy of information possible. So I am grateful to Wig Wiggins, Wayne Martin and yourself, long-standing Bing Crosby authorities, who bring up these points.

I thought it might be helpful to respond to these queries, not in a posture of defense, for indeed there are legitimate questions (and corrections) regarding the vocalists on some of these recordings, but rather to indicate what my reasoning was for the vocal assignments that I made.

1. *I'm Coming Virginia* (Victor matrix # 38135, takes 7 and 9), recorded on April 29, 1927. Some earlier discographies, notably those of Rust, have listed all three Rhythm Boys—Bing Crosby, Al Rinker, and Harry Barris—on these two sides. However, the Victor session log—and this is very clearly indicated—only lists Crosby and Barris. That there are only two vocalists is clear audibly during the harmony scatting. Is the second vocalist Barris, as the Victor log indicates, or is it Rinker? This question being raised, I was intrigued, and went back and listened very carefully again to both sides. I have to admit, it is difficult to tell whether it's Barris or Rinker just by listening, although even there I would tend to lean toward it being Barris, since his "hot cha" vocal mannerisms are present (he used these much more than Rinker did). For me, the Victor log entry especially tips things in favor of the second vocalist being Barris. These entries were nearly always correct—these are what were referred to when the musicians and vocalists got paid. There certainly is room, however, for a difference of opinion here.

2. *Ooh! Maybe It's You* (Victor matrix 39572, take 7), recorded on August 22, 1927. This one is pretty straight forward. The Victor session log very clearly lists just three vocalists—Jack Fulton, Austin "Skin" Young, and Charles Gaylord. Bing is not listed.

3. *Japanese Mammy* (Columbia matrix 146318, take 6), recorded on June 10, 1928. As Wig correctly points out, this one is in the gray area as to whether or not Bing is present on the humming chorus. The difficulty in stating this for certain stems from the fact that the two sources of vocalist listings, the file card and the session log, differ in their information; nor are either specific as to vocal personnel. The file card simply states: "quintet" (which would include Young). The session log, on the other hand, states: "Austin Young and miscellaneous trio." This is one of the few instances that the

recording session information was not specific as to vocalists. In the discography in my Whiteman book, I assumed that it was a quintet. This is only an assumption, and I really should have indicated this in the book. I thank Wig for raising this point. Indeed, listening to the recording again, it's difficult if not impossible to discern whether it's a trio or a quartet behind Young. If it's a trio, it would more than likely be Fulton/Gaylord/Young, as Wig suggests. Working on the assumption that it was a quintet, my reasoning was this: Whiteman at the time had six regular vocalists: Bing Crosby, Al Rinker, Harry Barris, Jack Fulton, Austin "Skin" Young, and Charles Gaylord. Once in a while, lead trombonist Boyce Cullen would be used. Of these, by far the five most often employed on records were Young, Fulton, Gaylord, Crosby, and Rinker. If I've counted correctly, out of the 59 Whiteman records with vocals from January-June 1928, Young is on 43, Fulton on 39, Gaylord on 33, Crosby on 30, and Rinker on 24. Barris, who was used much less often (mostly for Rhythm Boys vocals), sings on only 8 of these; Cullen is on 2. So it makes sense that if in fact a quintet was used for *Japanese Mammy,* quite likely it was Fulton, Gaylord, Young, Rinker, and Crosby. All of this, however, is only speculative, for the vocalists are not specifically listed in the Columbia session log or file card, nor is it certain that a quintet was even used. In my second volume of the Whiteman book, there will be an appendix for corrections, and I will be amending the vocalist assignment for this record to simply read: "Austin "Skin" Young and trio or quartet."

4. *If You Don't Love Me* (Columbia matrix 146544), session on June 17, 1928. Bing Crosby is listed as vocalist on the Columbia card file for these unissued takes.

5. *How About Me?* (Columbia matrix 14537), session on December 14, 1928. My assigning Bing as vocalist for these unissued takes is in error. As you correctly point out, Malcolm, the Rhythm Boys were in Kansas City on this date (where they were appearing at the Mainstreet Theatre), so Bing couldn't have been the vocalist. In one of my interviews with arranger Bill Challis, we listened to this record and discussed it, and, pointing out that the vocal is in a very low register for Bing, Challis was adamant that he had written the chart for Bing on vocal (perhaps expecting that the Rhythm Boys would return east from their tour by the time it was recorded). The Rhythm Boys returned to the New York area a few days after this session and appeared in local theatres, but I certainly agree that Bing would not have been back yet for the December 14 session. Looking back at my notes from the Columbia file cards, I don't list a vocalist for the *How About Me?* takes on December 14. The file card (which is for both sessions, December 14 and December 19, at which takes of this song were made) states: "Vocal in remake by Skin Young" beside the entries for takes 5, 6, and 7, recorded at the latter session. Some other Whiteman vocalist other than Bing must have sung on these first four takes. I fully agree that Bing's name should be taken off the vocalist assignment for the December 14 takes, and my corrections appendix in Volume 2 will reflect this. My corrected entry will not be specific as to who the vocalist is.

6. *My Angeline* (Columbia matrix 147751). Jack Fulton is clearly indicated on the Columbia file card as the vocalist in the January 11 (takes 1-4) and February 28 (takes 5-7) sessions, though Bing was used on the March 7, 1929 session (takes 8-12) from which the issued recording was made.

In summary, in my corrections appendix in volume 2 of my Whiteman book, I will be amending the vocal assignments in *Japanese Mammy* and *How About Me?* as indicated above. I also plan to indicate that though Harry Barris is listed in the Victor session log as the second vocalist (with Bing) on *I'm Coming Virginia,* there is still some difference of opinion on whether the vocalist is Barris or Rinker.

I really appreciate this kind of input. Though I spent decades working on this first volume on Paul Whiteman, there's still room for correction and refinement. I'm grateful that I can incorporate these corrections and comments into my second volume.

(Editor: A great letter from Don and it is indeed healthy to be able to debate these discographical queries. One man with definite views on the matters raised is Arne Fogel as you will read.)

Arne Fogel, Minneapolis / St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

I enjoyed the current BING, as always. The usual professional, quality job, a total credit to the memory of Crosby and always an impressive newly-minted piece of treasurable Crosbyana. Enjoyed the article about the new Whiteman book, but one piece of discographical "information" jumped out at me, and I'm glad to see that you called for reader's comments. Here's mine:

I don't care what the "Victor session logs" in Mr. Rayno's possession are telling him - there is absolutely NO QUESTION about the fact that Bing's vocal accompanist on "I'm Comin' Virginia" is Al Rinker. I can't understand what difficulty the author could possibly have. You listen, you hear..... The familiar voice of Al Rinker in the type of pre-arranged vocal scat duet they had previously recorded (Pretty Lips, I've Got The Girl, Wistful & Blue...). If one is familiar with this aspect of Whiteman's career, this should be a real "no-brainer".

What happened to previous information that stated that this session featured the THREE of them, then was revised (correctly) to admit that Barris is on "Side By Side" but NOT "Virginia"? Or Giddins' observation that the song was "flubbed" at an earlier (pre-Barris) date, which seems to indicate that the two of them - Rinker and Crosby - would have tried the same arrangement at the April session? Anyway, all the academics aside: my ear, trained by 40 years of listening to Bing and 30 years as a professional musician and recording studio vocalist, assures me that Bing and Al Rinker are singing this song. It's something I can state with absolute certainty.

(Editor: As Don says, there is indeed room for a difference of opinion here. Yer pays your money and yer takes your choice!)

Priscilla Koernig, San Mateo, California, USA.

Enjoyed reading the magazine as usual. Did want to let you know that the LEBING license plate does not belong to me (page 35, written by Wally Anthony). I'm not positive, but someone told me that it belongs to Cliff Brisbois. My car was in my garage at my home. I do have two license plate covers—-one reads "Going My Way with Bing", the other "On the Road with Bing Crosby". By the way, my last name is spelled KOERNIG, not Koenig.

Also I received the 2004 calendar and love the cover picture in color and the other monthly ones. Is each month's dates shown like that in other countries or is that a space saver? It's really not possible to use it as a calendar (that I'm used to). This was done that way one other year, but I didn't

comment. Hope you don't mind my comment now, but I don't care for that format.

(Editor: Apologies Priscilla for getting the ownership of the license plate wrong and indeed the spelling of your surname. Your comments about the calendar have been passed on to Ron Bosley for his consideration for next year.

Another annoying error in the last magazine was on page 53 when I stupidly put a photo of Kitty Carlisle over a caption saying it was Mary Carlisle! I must have had a mental blackout. Fortunately no-one seemed to notice but I thought that it was right to confess and put the record straight.)

George Patmore, Cressage, Shropshire, UK

Congratulations on the successful launch of another well filled BING magazine under its new corporate image.

I have been keenly working my way through "The Chronological Bing Crosby On Television" - another great tome of facts for Bing enthusiasts. We are now certainly well provided on all aspects of Bing's professional activities - records /CDs, films, radio and now TV. All concerned with its production deserve many thanks. As with any such all encompassing volumes, an occasional error / omission should not be a surprise - a miracle to get everything 100%. So, please, don't think I am "nit picking" when I refer to what I feel must be an error in respect of entry No. 289 27 August 1977 "Bing In Norway" page 173. I only refer to it because the "offended" party is a very well respected and competent drummer who, as a member of the Joe Bushkin Quartet accompanied Bing in that Norway concert. His name Jake Hanna. The acknowledgement, however, is given to "Jay Pana".

(Editor: Good spot, George, and I can't believe that I missed this error when compiling the listing. If anyone notices any other mistakes do please let me know. As you will all have realised by now, I'm only human!

We have recently realised that Bing sang more songs on his Bell Telephone Hour appearance on October 6, 1964 than we quoted in the book. It seems that he may have started with 'Great Day' then sang the songs we have listed before finishing up with 'When I Take My Sugar To Tea' and 'Never Be Afraid'. This came to light when visiting Johnny Joyce in Wolverhampton recently and finding the material on one of his old reel to reel tapes

And talking of Jake Hanna, coincidentally there was an interview with him in the San Diego-Union Tribune on February 21 and here's something he said:

> *"I have other favorites, like Joe Bushkin on the piano. Joe raises horses now. The sport of kings – only kings can afford it. Joe worked for 2? years with Bing Crosby, who knows something about horses, too. Now there was a man who loved to make music, Bing Crosby. I'd say that Bing was the best I ever bumped into."*

Well said, Jake.)

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, UK

By now there should be some feedback trickling in from across the Atlantic about BING 135. There will be several first time readers who must be impressed by their "new" magazine. I found it nicely balanced coverage from all sources. In fact. Stateside items probably exceeded UK news. This is how it probably ought to be considering that Bing's work was almost totally played out in North America. The photographs were exceptionally good. Ron Bosley has obviously reached deep into the archives to come up with several pictures that were new to print. The same can be said for the illustrations in *The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television.* And what a catchy title that is, by the way! The content and presentation of that book were first class. How unfortunate that the short print run resulted in a price which might have put it out of reach of several members. Anyone studying Bing's television work in detail will be struck by the number of "surprise" guest appearances. I believe that his contract with ABC prohibited any advanced publicity where he was seen on a rival network.

Your "Road From Eltham" article on Bob Hope provided a good overview of Hope's career, particularly where there was Crosby involvement. We saw the film "Seabiscuit" a few weeks ago. It made reference to the popular teaming of Hope and Crosby. Unfortunately the year depicted in the plot was 1937, which anticipated the partnership. I didn't bother groaning out loud because there were only four of us in the cinema at the time and the other three had come to be entertained by the movie rather than listen to a Bing anorak.

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia.

Congratulations for an excellent winter issue of BING. You and Wayne Martin have produced a worthy first issue for the new club. I enjoyed especially "Bing-ing Around", Part 2 of Howard Crosby's "Uncle Bing", the excellent report on the LA tribute by Judy Schmid (must have been a beaut night) and Keith Parkinson's contributions. I have a question which you might pass on to Keith. *Doctor Rhythm* includes an early scene in which Bea Lillie demonstrates to police officers an act she plans to do at a benefit concert. She's accompanied by a pianist whom I believe is Ed Sullivan, the later-to-be TV compere. As far as I'm aware, he's not credited for this minor, non-speaking part but your book reveals that Bing and Ed Sullivan played golf together at that time. What do you think?

The pianist in question.

(Editor: Keith and I have had a look at 'Doctor Rhythm' again and whilst we can see the similarity, we wouldn't have thought it was Ed. The man looks older than Ed would have been at the time but in theory it could have been him. The golf matches involving Bing, Hope and Sullivan did sometimes involve wagers requiring the losers to work in the winner's films. Ed was certainly in Hollywood at that time and 'Doctor Rhythm'

was the film that Bob Hope was supposed to appear in having lost to Bing at golf. The Internet Movie Database doesn't list Ed as appearing though and they are very good at identifying uncredited appearances.)

Jon Oye, Chicago, USA

Thanks for a superb issue of BING magazine in its initial International Club Crosby incarnation. I enjoyed everything in it - particularly Howard Crosby's personal recollections, Pete Cakanic's intriguing observations concerning a possible anti-Bing conspiracy, Judy Schmid's thorough review of the Motion Picture Arts & Sciences event (wish I could have been there!), as well as the usual fine work by the usual suspects. And I was pleased to see the wonderful caricature of Bing by Joe Sinnott, of whom I've been a long time fan. If this issue is any indication of what the post-merger magazine will be like, then I think we can all look forward to a bright future for the "new" ICC.

Frank Startup, 136 Stratton Heights, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2RL, United Kingdom

I wonder if you, or any fellow ICC members, can help with a query? When I first listened to Bing's 1977 recording of 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore', I was struck by how well his voice was complemented by the bass during his vocal chorus. It reminded me of the 1931 'One More Time' in which, again, his vocal chorus was accompanied by a prominent bass which accentuated the warmth of his tones and his rhythmic drive. I began fantasising about a possible 'Bing With a Bass' album featuring Crosby with someone like the great Ray Brown, but by then, of course, it was too late.

Recently, I bought a Ray Brown CD called 'Some of My Best Friends are Singers', an excellent collection in which he provides backing for modem jazz singers such as Dee Dee Bridgewater and Diana Krall. The sleeve notes contain part of an interview with Ray Brown in which Brown talks about his musical relationship with his wife, Ella Fitzgerald. The interviewer says: "Ray is quick to point out that in addition to Ella, he worked with a distinguished list of vocalists including Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Sarah Vaughan".

Well, this has me stumped. At first, I thought Ray Brown must have been one of the luminaries brought together by Buddy Bregman in 1956, but the personnel list doesn't support this. Presumably, Brown must have been bassist in one of the bands which backed Bing at some stage, but I can't readily associate him with any of them, and besides, the comment implies something more substantial.

So, when, and on what, did Ray Brown work with Bing Crosby?

(Editor: I'm guessing that he may have worked in a band supporting Bing on one of his TV appearances but I cannot confirm this. Anyone have any bright ideas?)

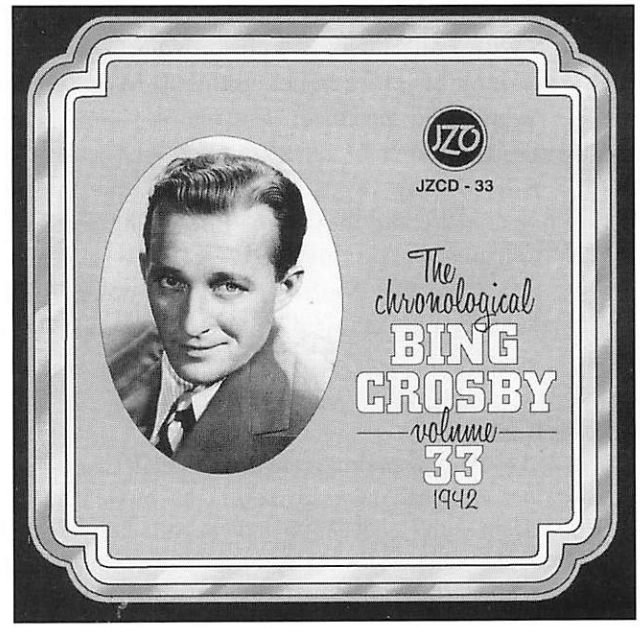
Jeremy Rose, Cairanne, France.

IN PRAISE OF JONZO

When, as a teenager in the late '70s, I first started seriously collecting the recordings of Bing Crosby, the task facing me was quite a daunting one. Admittedly, it was still relatively easy to build up a fairly respectable collection by buying readily available LP releases, usually on the MCA or Ace of Clubs labels. I could even obtain some fairly rare radio and studio material by going to one of the specialist shops in London and picking up one or two of the privately produced *Spokane* series of LPs. I even remember swallowing hard on one occasion and forking out £25 *each* for three of the *Bing's Hollywood* series - and this more than twenty years ago!

My aim right from the start was always to build up as comprehensive a collection of Bing's recording career as possible. With the publication of Bert Bishop and John Bassett's *Bing - Just for the Record* in 1980, the virtual impossibility of the task I had set myself became depressingly clear. In fact, I'm ashamed to say that I actually gave up completely for a couple of years.

Then, one day in the mid 80's I was walking past James Asman's specialist record shop in New Row in London's Covent Garden. (Mr. Asman and his shop are, unfortunately, no longer with us...) An LP in the window caught my eye and suddenly I was hooked again. I found myself looking at volume 1 of a series called *The Chronological Bing Crosby*. As the notes said, the series aimed to make available "the complete commercially issued recording career of Bing Crosby in chronological order." This was a dream come true..! The dream lasted for 13 volumes on LP, and after a *very* worrying time when I thought they wouldn't make it onto CD, the series was re-launched in the new medium.



We have now reached volume 33, and, at the time of writing I have on my shelves, in a space covering just 34cm of shelf-space, every single take recorded by Bing between the very first session on October 18th 1926 and June 10th 1942. I'm expecting vols. 34 &35 any day now...

The producer, John McNicholas, produces the series to the highest possible standards. Transfers are state-of-the-art, notes and personnel details are excellent, and the series would be a credit to any of the big labels who release Crosby material - and all at a price which makes them *extremely* competitive.

Mr McNicholas depends upon the generosity and hard work of several dedicated collectors world-wide in providing pressings of the rarer items in the series. In spite of all this hard work and dedication, Mr McNicholas recently told me that the series is in fact experiencing a gradual decline because of lack of sales. I would *urge* anyone who has not yet sampled the series to do so without delay.

I can completely accept that some collectors might be deterred by the very presence of all those alternative takes which make the series unique. Speaking personally, I love the

fact that *Bing - Just for the Record* tells me that, for instance, Bing recorded 3 separate takes of *Pale Moon* on December 23rd 1940, and there they all are on volume 29. For those who aren't convinced by that argument, I would just say that on almost every volume of the series there are at least three or four rare gems, for which you would probably wait in vain for release on a commercial CD.

This is an amazing project and a unique opportunity for Crosby collectors everywhere. Let's all support it.

(Editor: Jeremy is absolutely right. This is indeed a marvellous series that ought to be supported by as many of us as possible. The latest issues are detailed in 'Keeping Track' in this issue. John McNicholas does not have vast resources at his disposal like the record companies and this makes his project all the more remarkable. Use it or lose it!

Now let's move from letters from members, to letters from Bing.)

DEAR BILL,

It is often said that Bing never really got close to anyone after the death of Eddie Lang. His later friendship with Phil Harris is well known but we often tend to overlook his close bonds with Bill Morrow who was his writer and producer for many years. Some months ago, a number of letters and postcards sent by Bing to Bill Morrow were sold through the Internet auction house eBay and they make interesting reading.

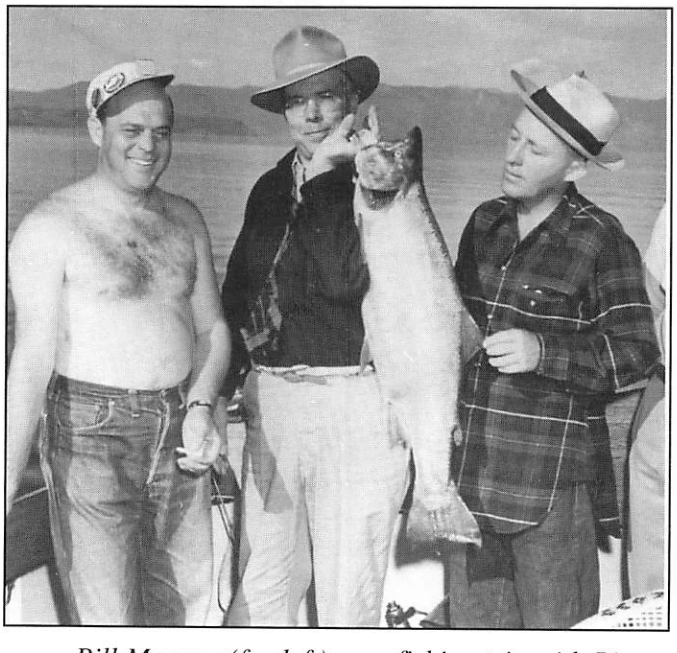
The first was dated July 2, 1945 and was a letter addressed to Cpl. Bill Morrow, Armed Forces Radio Service, 6011 Santa Monica Blvd. Hollywood 38. It reads:

> Dear Izaak,
> I talked to Phil this morning while he was in Elko buying a new hat. He asked me to advise you that he went to Wild Horse Dam with Ralph Smith and caught a 20 inch land-locked salmon. He's discontinuing the trout counter in his market, and will push salmon, exclusively.
> Yours
> Bing Crosby

Nothing much, but clearly Bing was already friendly with Bill Morrow who had established his reputation as a writer for Jack Benny. Why Bing called him Izaak I don't know.

In 1946, Bing had left the *Kraft Music Hall* and was looking to record his show for a suitable sponsor. On June 3 that year, he was at Hugh Bradford's Alturas Lake Ranch at Hailey, Idaho and he wrote a hugely significant letter to Morrow.

> Dear Bill,
> We leave here today for Spokane and then on up to the location at Jasper Park. Had a great time here with Spike & Dolly, the Eacrets, Ralph Smith and Vic Hunter. Quite a bit of ad-lib drinking went on and yesterday, by noon, Spike was leaning back quite a bit. We caught 80 red-fish yesterday morning and spent the afternoon dredging the bottom with some choice ???(word illegible) trying to shake up a big one, but no luck. Too early I guess. I hope your plans have developed so you can come up to Nevada and on up here about mid-June. Johnny has several places cased for you and the Wild Horse Dam and the lake fishing will be available. Just phone or wire him at Tuscarora where and when to meet you.
>
> I should hear something from Kapp by the time I reach Jasper and I hope, for the benefit of all concerned, it is something favorable. If not we can apply some pressure in the rite spot. The General Motors transcribed show is very hot rite now for about September opening. I propose the following lineup.
>
> Glen Wheaton - Producer
> Bill Morrow - Writer
> Trotter - Band & choir
> Les Paul - guitar accompaniment, occasional specialties.
> Skitch Henderson - Piano solo and accompaniment.
> Charioteers, Specialties, accompanist Peggy Lee, or some ?? (illegible) with a similar delivery.
> Crosby
>
> This will be a package arrangement with possibly first four shows live and maybe one or two others during the year, at our option. It should be an easy show for you to write - with Wheaton doing documentary material - and such guests as we use, being of a type suitable for humor.
>
> Jack tells me he is going to Mammoth on the 15th., so you got yourself a nice parley, Mammoth to Nevada to Sun Valley. I'll see you probably around July 1st and we can discuss the foregoing at that time.
>
> Take care of all the local grummet (?) in my absence.
> Bing



Bill Morrow (far left) on a fishing trip with Bing.

Clearly, Bing had decided that Morrow was to be his

writer for the new series but what is also fascinating is how Bing is setting out the format he wants for the show. As we know the show came about for Philco in due course with Bill Morrow and Murdo MacKenzie acting as producers. Presumably Glen Wheaton, who was the writer for Frank Sinatra's Old Gold Show around that time, was not available.

On April 9, 1947, Bing transcribed his Philco show at the Hines Hospital for Veterans in Chicago. The next day he went to the French Lick Springs Hotel in Indiana to play in a golf tournament. Whilst there, he despatched a hand-written letter to Bill Morrow at the Ambassador East Hotel in Chicago. He also arranged for Morrow to take over his suite at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago whilst he was absent.

Dear Bill,
That was quite a hassle last eve, but I guess we'll get away with it. You know I told that ass, Banks, to kick the P.A. way up to overcome the size and volume of the band in that small room and playing from that shell - I think he turned it off altogether. It was a tough audience, but suitable. We should pre-cut songs downtown again as we're using Hank *[Greenberg - the baseball player],* show at base can be later. Any home the hospital authorities approve. And I think we should definitely go to the base.

Also all shows in New York area should be from hospitals, with pre-cuts made at studio unless inordinately expensive. We should have more time at the hospital for dialogue rehearsal and piano rehearsal on songs, and for a suitable warm-up, and this last named (?), I don't think they heard half of what was said or sung. It seems to me, when we're working from a hospital, and announce it as such, no one is going to be so captious as to criticize quality. We have the pre-cuts on the songs in any case. On this show we should use pre cuts of all numbers save *[Dorothy]* Shay's solo and possibly Albuquerque *[song 'The Belle of Albuquerque'].* These may have been best at the hospital. I want to use Shay for a solo and some small talk next week or some dame equally should be set.

I left a large brown envelope containing some mail in Charlie Crane's apt at the Churchill. Have Ja(y)ne pick it up. It has a letter in it for you. Be sure and use the Edgewater clippings. You can work better there, and be free from interruption whether engaged in social activity or literary endeavor. Don't use Shay if you're going to be short and cut her anyhow. I heard show last nite but we used wrong take on Glocca. Otherwise it (illegible).

Weather balmy here - nice trip down - hope phones go in soon and we can discuss these things more in detail..

Tell Sam they're running at (illegible) and I may ease a few heats (?).
Regards,
Bing

Have Ja(y)ne call Bennat at Hines and ask for some photos taken at show and before.

Again, it is interesting to see how Bing is pulling the strings and not relying on producers or other advisers. He went on to record another show in the Chicago area on April 16 at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

On December 8, 1947 Monday. Bill Balderston, Group Executive Vice President at the Philco Corporation writes to Bing:

Dear Bing,
I have intended all Fall to drop you a line and tell you how much we are enjoying your programs. As Jimmie Carmine says, "They are terrific!" We are all very happy about the results in the field - - as you probably know, radio is a complete sellout. Our distributors have no stocks, and we are pushing all the plants for maximum output!

We have talked about our visit to Tuscarora many times. It was really the high spot of our Western trip. The movies we took of you and the boys are really very good, and we have run them many times for our friends.

Under separate cover we are sending a very small gift for you and the boys. Hope it arrives safely. Tell Lin he had better practice up his "mumble-peg" so that the next time we get together he can win from us all.

Susan and the boys join me in wishing all of you a happy, joyous Christmas. We are looking forward to seeing you in New York after the holidays.

Bing passes the letter to Bill Morrow with the pencilled comments "It's about time." Two days later, during his Philco show, Bing mentions the Hotel Drake in New York and this produces a letter from Helen E. Jones, the Hotel's Publicity Director.

Dear Bing Crosby,
Everyone here at the Drake, from the valet to the manager, thanks you for your plug on the Drake on last night's program.

It's good to know you haven't forgotten your stay here and we often speak of your pleasant visit and the fun it was to hear that familiar voice right in our midst.

I've chalked up as my best remembrance my birthday last May when you sang that song just for me. It's the little things like that, and the thought you have of others that makes it seem like a darned good world. You've done more than your share in establishing that fact.

Say hello for me to Bill Morrow.
Sincerely

Bing annotates the letter with a pencilled instruction to his secretary "To Morrow and send Xmas card."

We jump forward a year to June 22, 1948 and to a postcard posted at Bijou, near Lake Tahoe. Bing is taking his four boys to the ranch at Elko and he writes:

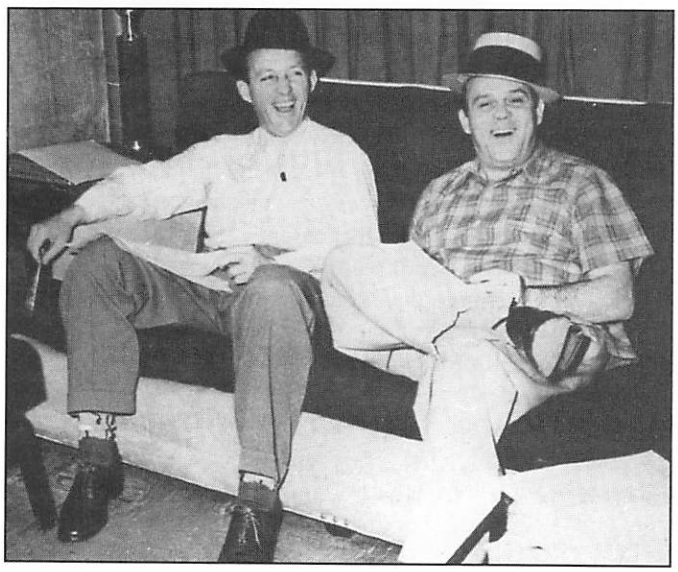
Just checking on various California fishing grounds.

Think you could dunk your cuttyhunk (?) in these waters with some hope. Having lots of laffs with my companions.
Bing.

During his stay at Elko during the summer of 1948, Bing sends another hand-written letter to Morrow.

Dear Bill,
I had your note (?) the other day relative to Philco starting dates and length of contract. The way I feel now with the tax cut losing out and one thing and another, I'd just as soon chuck the whole deal and concentrate on pictures. The money isn't enough to compensate for the work everybody puts into it. And if we can't work at convenient times, what good is it? I think you better tell them we want 36 weeks. First show to be on October 1st. or we retire. Furthermore I hear nothing from ABC regarding their promise to give our corporation some stock - a substantial block. They apparently think I'm thinking about switching network, but I'll either do that or quit. I wish you and Jack could get up here around July 4 from Mammoth and we can discuss this at greater length.

It's nice up here now. Warm days - cold nites. The boys, of course, are having a whale of a time. But it's quite a chore looking after them. Joe Knowles is up for a couple days with his two kids and the six of them keep things jumping pretty good. Lots of laughs with them too, of course. Went fishing the other day up above the ranch and did good. Nice size but the water is low I don't know how long it will last. We're going on a 2 day trip this weekend with Oldham over on the (illegible) river. He rode guns up this week, so it's virgin water, and very good, by all reports. Wild Horse is good and Smith caught a 10lb Rainbow in Ruby Valley. Alas the mountain lakes are contracted. Say hello to Jack.
Bing



Bing and Bill Morrow enjoy a joke.

Bing did in fact stay with Philco for another season before switching to CBS and Chesterfield but it's fascinating to read his private views on the situation.

A few months later on September 24, 1948, Bing is staying at Radium Hot Springs, British Columbia and he sends another postcard to Morrow.

Boiling out here after big Jasper post hunt celebration. (illegible) tho lots of snow. See you soon.
Bing

Inconsequential but the type of card you would send to a friend or relative to whom you were particularly close. Within a day, Bing is staying at the Davenport Hotel, Spokane and he sends another postcard to Bill Morrow.

Dear Bill,
Sorry I can't make the program on October 3rd but this seems much more important to me and I'm sure you'll agree. I've made arrangements with John M?? of TWA to fly parties in to case the collection. Having big time in Spokane. Rutherford and McGrath (?) are sure as hell to ensure Jon Chadst(?) comes along. Bill, see you soon.
Bing.

In fact, Bing did make the program on October 3 but again we reproduce the postcard to reflect just how close the relationship was. Bing refers to Morrow frequently in *Call Me Lucky* and in fact Bill worked with Bing from 1946 until the late 1960s. He went to France with Bing in 1950 and 1953, and on many fishing trips including the one which resulted in Bing being turned away from the hotel in Vancouver when he was scruffily dressed. Bing also arranged for Bill to build a house on land at Palm Desert alongside his own home there. Morrow died from cancer in 1971 but Bing stayed close to his widow Mary (nee Henderson) and Kathryn Crosby makes frequent reference to Mary Morrow in her latest book.

We have to make a strong case for Bill Morrow being one of the few people allowed to get really close to Bing.

Malcolm Macfarlane

'BING CROSBY ENTERTAINS' - THE WOODBURY SHOWS

Lionel Pairpoint is back with fresh information about Bing's Woodbury series.

In the search for details of Bing Crosby's radio appearances, the Woodbury Soap programmes have proved more difficult to unravel than the secrets of the Sphinx. Three complete shows from the series plus an odd song, survive but despite countless hours, hunting through scores of reels of microfilm and approaching

every possible source for information, the contents of a great proportion of the broadcasts remain unknown. Having sailed through the, relatively, few programmes, that comprised the preceding 'Music That Satisfies' series, the reasons for this sudden paucity of data have been frustrating, to say the least but I still have the feeling that somewhere, perhaps some small town newspaper may hold those 'lost' secrets which have eluded us.

I wrote the above the above for inclusion in my book *"...And Here's Bing!"*, but since then, directly due to the kind offices of Wig Wiggins and Michael Feinstein, and more particularly, with the gracious permission of Kathryn Crosby, to whom we are especially indebted, a quantity of further information has now come to light, in the form of scripts (some of them annotated in Bing's own handwriting), together with timing sheets, details of some commercials and comedy routines.

A gross oversight must be corrected, immediately. The series for Woodbury had a title. This was, quite simply, 'Bing Crosby Entertains'. Unfortunately, the compiler had been too bleary-eyed (or just plain dumb!), to recognise the significance of a slogan that had stared him in the face, on several occasions, during years of perusing microfilm of the newspapers of the day.

But naturally, things are never quite as straightforward as they might appear. Puzzles and pitfalls lie in wait and at first sight, it might be considered fortunate that we have the benefit of being able to hear two complete shows that have appeared on microgroove issues and comparing them with these documents.

The first of these is the first show for the second season (No. 34, broadcast on September 18, 1934). This has been represented on two microgroove issues, (Spokane 1 - 'Bing Crosby - On The Air' and on Totem LP1008 - 'Bing Crosby - On The Air'). There are no less than four scripts/cue sheets for this programme, all written by Claude Binyon. (Some indication of Binyon's lengthy association with Bing Crosby can be checked by reference to Fred Reynolds' book 'The Road To Hollywood'). These papers are dated up to six weeks before the actual broadcast and to the layman, the cues seem so painstakingly, explicit, as to border on 'insulting' to a thirty-one year-old singer with some 250 radio appearances behind him. For example, 'Orchestral number with Bing singing only one chorus - and that chorus should be followed by at least 32 instrumental bars to give Bing a chance to catch his breath before speaking'!

Had we not had the aural reference, the problem would have been that no titles are given to the orchestral items and there is no mention of the Boswell Sisters. Two of the scripts are virtually identical and for the musical items, Binyon has left gaps and merely typed 'Number 1 - Song by Bing and Orchestra' or 'Number 4 - Orchestra Number' etc., and it obvious that, at this date, the scriptwriter had no indication that either the Boswell Sisters or Georgie Stoll Orchestra would be involved. A third, undated copy, is almost a complete rewrite that was not used. However, the fourth script appears to have passed through Bing's hands and we must surmise that the same disagreements, regarding the show's theme song that arose in the first series surfaced again, in the new season. Early in the first series, *Variety* of October 31, 1933 contained the following:

> Controversy between Bing Crosby and Woodbury Soap over what theme song shall prevail in that commercial Monday night session over CBS, has been settled. Commercial and its agency, Lennon & Mitchell, yielded to the baritone and henceforth, 'In *(sic)* The Blue Of The Night' stays in the programme and 'Loveliness' is out. Crosby argued that the logical theme for the stanza was 'Blue Of The Night', on the grounds that the song had been identified with him ever since he's been on the air. Sponsor and agency's contention was that the 'Loveliness' tune has always been the theme of the Woodbury programmes, no matter what name was connected with them and for this reason the old bars should stick. In answer to this, Crosby pointed out, that even though there were some listeners who associated the 'Loveliness' melody with the product, it seemed to him that the listener association of 'Blue Of The Night' and himself at the opening of the programme would be of greater benefit all round.

The opening page for show No. 34 (the first of the second series) reads as follows:

'MUSIC: Few bars of new theme - Bing and Orchestra'.

The words **'new theme'** have been ruthlessly (?) struck out and Bing has inserted, **'Blue of Night' - '16 Bars'**! It is possible that the sponsors might have preferred, 'Beautiful Lady', the number that was regularly played by the orchestra, as a lead-in to commercials.

There is still no mention of Connie, Vet and Martha but the introduction for the Georgie Stoll Orchestra is written exactly as broadcast. That is, with exception of just one deleted line, 'Listen to the boys who have been a sensation on the Shell Oil program'. No free plugs from the sponsors of Woodbury Soap!

Amid a confusing jumble of pencilled arrows and crossing out, the crooner was, apparently, also scheduled to sing, 'Straight From The Shoulder (Right From The Heart)' and 'Someday Sweetheart'. It seems feasible that these songs were shelved to accommodate the Boswells' appearances and both were to be used later, on Programme No. 36.

In complete contrast, the other complete show of which we have indisputable audio evidence is Programme No. 60 (Microgroove issues on Avenue International AV.INT1018 - 'Bing Crosby At His Extra

Bing with the Boswell Sisters on a Woodbury programme.

Speciale' and Spokane 12 - 'Bing In The Thirties'). This is virtually word for word as scripted, excepting the deletion of a single page of excruciatingly, unfunny dialogue with guest, Charlie Irwin.

Almost all of the second series for Woodbury Soap is represented in the mass of papers, together with a few programmes from the first series. Details of these latter shows (Nos. 21, 22, 26 and 27) should be the most authentic, having been compiled in retrospect, as timing sheets, either from a rehearsal or, more probably, from the actual broadcast.

To illustrate, here is an example from Programme No. 22 of 12th March 1934:

MARCH 12/34
ORCHESTRA: FANFARE, SHORT ANNOUNCEMENT, BLUE OF THE NIGHT 0:25
BING CROSBY: 8 BARS PIGGY 0:37
ANNOUNCEMENT: 0:50
CROSBY: LOVE LOCKED OUT (2:17) 3:07
ORCHESTRA: SPIN A LITTLE WEB OF DREAMS (3:03) 6:10
THEME AND COMMERCIAL (1:00) 7:10
CROSBY AND MILLS BROTHERS: NAGASACKI (Sic) (1:50) 9:00
ORCHESTRA: YOU OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES (1:45) 10.45
CROSBY: THIS LITTLE PIGGY WENT TO MARKET (2:50) 13:35
THEME AND DRAMATISED COMMERCIAL (2:15) 5:50
ORCHESTRA: MOONLIGHT ON THE WATER (2:35) 8:25
MILLS BROTHERS: HEAVEN ON A MULE (Sic) (1:25) 19:50
ORCHESTRA: SWEET MADNESS (:35) 20:25
CROSBY: SPINNING WHEEL (Sic) (4.45) 25.10
THEME AND COMMERCIAL (1:25) 26:35

CROSBY: CARIOCA (1:40) 28:15
THEME AND COMMERCIAL, BLUE OF THE NIGHT, CROSBY, TAG GOODNIGHT LOVELY LITTLE LADY AND CLOSING (1:15) 29:30

There is also a handwritten breakdown of aggregate times which reads as follows:

CROSBY	11:32
MILLS BROS	3:15
ORCH	7:58
OPEN & CLOSE	2:05
THEME & COMM	4:40
	29:30

A further analytical page is headed, 'TYPICAL SETUP WOODBURY'S PROGRAM' and offers the following summary:

BING CROSBY (3 songs of about 2:20-3:00)	11:00
BOSWELL SISTERS (2 songs of about 2:20-3:00)	5:30
ORCHESTRA (3 songs of about 2:00-2:30)	6:30
OPENING AND CLOSING	2:00
COMMERCIALS	4:30
	29:30

It should be pointed out that the times shown against Bing's name would not, accurately, reflect his total contribution, as he would also have been actively involved, in the other four classifications, by way of introductions, 'lead ins' and dialogue with Ken Niles.

Bearing this in mind, a timing sheet for the show of 16th April 1934 is marked, 'WITH CROSBY ALONE'. The time allotted for Bing's 'singing' chores, on this occasion, had increased to a shade under fourteen minutes and required him to sing five songs.

The Mills Brothers had bowed out on the show immediately preceding this and for the concluding broadcasts of the 1933/34 series, no evidence has come to light of any other guest appearances, suggesting that, apart from the usual couple of orchestral items, he carried these last seven programmes, without other support.

Indeed, an edited version of the final broadcast of this first season (No. 33), was issued on Fanfare Records LP-40-140 - 'Great Singers Of The 1930's - Live Broadcasts' and the audio evidence contained therein reveals that, on this occasion, he was obliged to sing, six numbers.

Bing at work for Woodbury.

Recalling the slight contretemps with the sponsors which was to occur later, in the Kraft Music Hall series, regarding the possible overuse of his talents, the feeling is that this 'extra' burden would not have sat too well with Bing and there were indications that he was pressing for 'guests' to share the workload.

Significantly, none of the 39 shows that comprised the last season with Woodbury were aired without some form of additional, vocal or instrumental assistance. It is also noticeable that for the last 16 of these programmes, Bing did not participate in the sometimes, lengthy, commercials. This duty was mainly taken over by Ken Niles and a 'Miss Janet Parker', who is variously described as being from 'the Woodbury staff' or, more grandly as, 'Woodbury's well-known beauty consultant'.

The specimen timing sheet reproduced above also illustrates the problems encountered by the researcher who may be attempting to identify the correct titles of the songs used. Casual abbreviation was the order of the day and is exemplified by the laconic, '8 Bars Piggy'. In this case, head-scratching is unnecessary as the full title is shown later. By-passing the misspelling of 'Nagasacki', we are then confronted with, 'Heaven On A Mule' ('Goin' To Heaven On A Mule') and 'Spinning Wheel' ('The Old Spinning Wheel') both of which are likely to pose problems when consulting a purely, alphabetical song thesaurus. A few of the instrumental numbers have proved to be difficult to trace and the titles shown in the scripts have been taken, exactly as written.

Although there is still little or no knowledge of half of the programmes that made up the first series for Woodbury, this monumental and unexpected discovery must be considered a landmark in the chronicling of Bing Crosby's early career on radio.

But, the shows of which we still lack knowledge are those of:

November 20 and 27, December 4 and 25, all 1933
January 1, 8, 15 and 29, February 5 and 26, all 1934
March 19 and 26, April 23 and 30, all 1934.
May 7, 14 and 21, all 1934

It may be that your local paper at the time listed the songs to be sung on the show and if so I'd love to have details.

Lionel Pairpoint
86 Ellesmere Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 3HD, UK. Phone: 0208 959 3394
Email: Lionelpairp@hotmail.com

Temptation?

There is a Bing matter on which members may be able to shed some light. In 1990, Joe Franklin played on his radio show a recording of 'Temptation' by Bing which Franklin stated might be the last recording Bing made. When I heard that I was skeptical. However, the recording definitely was Bing, the late voice, with full orchestra, full-length with reprise. Franklin is unable to locate the tape which he played and I have checked with Ken Barnes and he says that he definitely did not record 'Temptation' with Bing. Any information would be very much appreciated. Please advise the Editor so that he can publish the results in a subsequent issue.

Martin McQuade

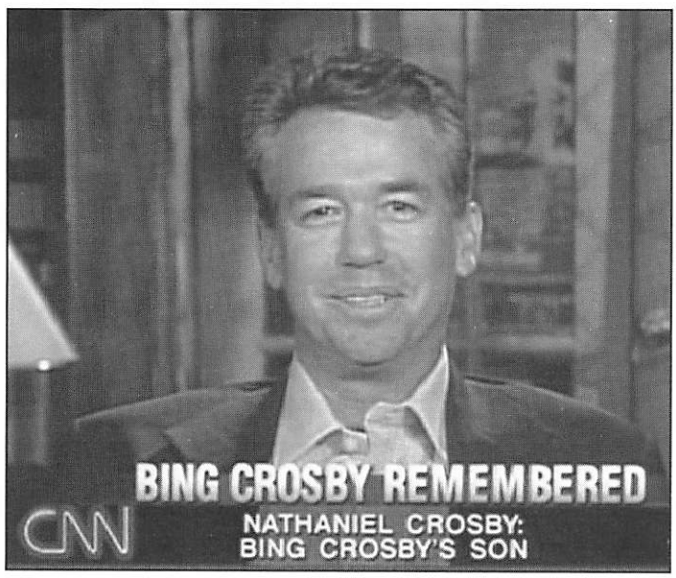
BING ON THE BOX

Bert Bishop looks at recent sightings of Bing on TV and radio around the world.

It's quite amazing just how much material for publication continues to pour into the 'ICC offices', so much so that our Editor's problem is not what he is going to print but what has to be left out! Of course, a post-Christmas edition always will be amply supplied with seasonal films and music – for the Mr. Christmas tag is the one that lingers longest. An up and coming generation being more likely to associate Bing with the Yuletide festivities than remember him for any other reason.

LARRY KING LIVE - 'BING CROSBY REMEMBERED'

Waking up to a Bing programme on a Christmas holiday morning [In my own case viewing it while still in bed!] was a joyous start to the day's festivities. For me this was the ultimate in serendipity for I was trawling the Sky news channels and hit on the CNN *Larry King Live* programme *Bing Crosby Remembered* on which the American interviewer had as his guest Kathryn Crosby, Bing's daughter, Mary Frances and son Nathaniel. Also linked via other studios were Andy Williams and Celeste Holm. Though heavily interrupted by ads and with a trailing 'breaking news' footer it was, nonetheless, a happy and informative look at much of Bing's career and how his family were now keen to promote, more positively, his memory. After some initial introductions and early film footage, there was a key question from Larry when he asked Nathaniel what Bing was like as a dad, as a particular response to Gary Crosby's infamous book.

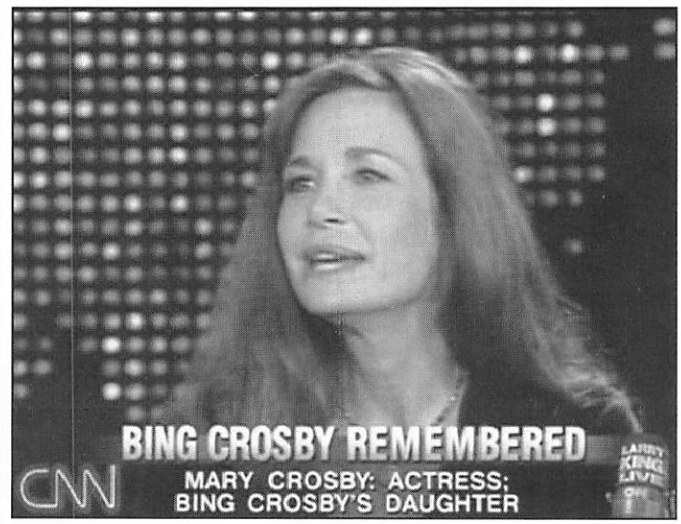


"He was a terrific dad. He's the kind of dad that I'm trying to be for my children. He gave each of us a lot of one-on-one attention. With me, it was the golf and the sports. We'd go to the forty-niner games just the two, of us, every home game in Candlestick Park. He made my childhood so special. He got me in full uniform on the Pittsburgh Pirates bench when they played the Giants at Candlestick and we must have gone to about ten or fifteen games a year. He'd arrange it so that I'd be sitting next to Danny Murtaugh in full uniform on the Pirates bench. He took me back to the World Series and just a lot of incredible one-on-one time; and played golf with me and my brother pretty much every weekend and almost every day in the summers."

"What did you make of the stories [in the book], Kathryn?" asked Larry.

"Well, Gary called and asked if he had ever been rude to his father, if he had ever done things. He said, 'There are years I don't remember.' I could only tell him the truth which was, no, he was never rude to his father. He was very respectful toward his father, and Bing had always been very nice to him. He gave him so many opportunities on his television shows and all of his specials."

King: "That book was a shocker. How did you react, Mary?"



"I can't speak for Gary or what his reality was. I only know what mine was. And it was very different from what that book was all about. So, I can only speak from my experience." and went on to agree that the father that Gary described in the book was someone quite foreign to her, as did Nathaniel with the words:

"I think the detail of that is that the content of the book was a little bit different than the publicity of the book. I think the content of the book was more of a knock on Gary and the way it was publicized, obviously to sell books, it became a knock on Dad. Also, my Dad was brought up in the parochial schools, and what was okay then is not okay now."

Larry King asked Mary Frances why his legend hadn't carried like Presley's and Sinatra's.

"I think a lot had to do with us as a family. In many ways, he was the core of our family. When he died, we all disintegrated. In a certain respect. Part of that had to

do with not maintaining his image. Not knowing quite how to protect ourselves, how to keep his name out there. His fans have been unbelievable. The Ernest Sutkowskis and the George O'Reillys and all of them."

King referred to the Presley museum at Graceland and how Sinatra's daughters were putting on a show at Radio City to which Mary Frances replied:

"There was a lot of organization... and work and knowledge behind it all, and I think we're just now starting to learn about that. So I would say that much of it had to do with us as a family not knowing how to implement how he was, properly. Also, in life, he was a very private man. And I think in death, he remained that way. So it was who he was, as well."

Larry King: "Well said. Andy, what do you think?"

Andy Williams: "Well, I think probably because he was such a private guy and all of his loved ones around him knew that. I think probably this is the way he would like it. He is certainly not forgotten. I mean, everybody loves him, and everybody knows him and everybody admired him so much. But I think they're letting him rest in peace, as they say. That's the way I would like it for me, I know."

In addressing Celeste Holm, Larry King said; "What do you think? Why he doesn't — you know, when they say let's talk about the legends, you think Presley, you think Sinatra and you don't think of Bing immediately."

"I do." she replied, heavily stressing the 'I' in a very positive 'end of story' put down. Still looking attractive she was very generous in her praise of Bing, much in the same mould as Rosemary Clooney who would never hear a bad word said about her long-time friend and fellow performer.

Kathryn Crosby came back on to say "I think things are happening that are so exciting now. This is his Centennial. And people like Northern Trust have invited me back for the whole month of March and so I'm doing a whole month of shows, reading from the book, 'My Last Years With Bing', singing his songs with them, meeting people that have loved Bing all his life. At the places like Hofstra and Gonzaga, where they've had centennial celebrations, there have been a lot of young people that have always loved his music. There are people that have their favorite movie, their favorite songs. They are sending me prints of movies that I never saw!"

Nathaniel expanded on that theme by stating; "I would say clearly, that when my Dad died, cable TV was not around, the 1-800 number, buy your CD direct off the TV. The distribution opportunities were not around. Actually, Dad's products are being seen more today than they were back in '77 when there was just the three network stations. I think that we as a family will get organized and start to regenerate it. I don't think you can rely on the music industry to re-popularise my father. I think it happens automatically every year at Christmas. We've been so enthralled in our own careers to this point that we haven't really had a dedicated effort but we're about to launch one."

This comes as good news indeed. Let's hope that Bing's family does, in fact, implement their new-found desire to not only keep alive but further promote their patriarch's memory. All in all a very satisfying and enjoyable 'live' hook-up that was recorded in October last year.

A TIME TO BE JOLLY

Greg Van Beek, whose favourite Christmas album title heads this paragraph, writes:

"The radio station WJUB AM1420 *The Breeze*, in Plymouth, Wisconsin takes the prize for playing the most Bing music [in my area]. Since September 8th, they have played a different Bing Crosby recording each weekday at 6:40am on their 'Bing Sings' feature. Also, subsequent to Thanksgiving, they played nothing but Christmas music twenty-four hours a day. With my help, Bing is heard twice each hour, every hour every day! And not just the common stuff; my friend Dave Hendrickson, who hosts the morning show featured tracks like 'White World Of Winter'; 'Sleigh Ride' (1977 version); 'I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm' (with Buddy Cole); 'A Time To Be Jolly'; 'And The Bells Rang'; 'Marshmallow World', and the new Bing - Clay Aiken duet. Dave still does the 'Bing Sings' feature, though during the holiday season he used only Bing's Christmas music. A typical example being 'We Wish You The Merriest' in honor of Frank Sinatra's birthday. I arranged, recently, for Kathryn Crosby to tape an interview with Dave to promote her book at which time she taped a special introduction for the 'Bing Sings'."

On the 12th December, Greg was the guest, for the second year running, on Tom Shanahan's *Club 60* Christmas Special, located on WTKM Radio Fm 104.9 in Hartford, Wisconsin, where both Bing and Bob Hope provided all the musical and comedy entertainment. One such item was an appearance by the ninety-one year old Bob, and his wife Dolores! About a dozen seasonal tracks were featured, including a radio medley of carols from one of Bing's programmes, plus a Christmas comedy sketch by Bing and Bob. Perhaps I can persuade Greg to have my own Christmas favourite, 'O Holy Night', played on next year's show. He's a popular visitor and bound to be asked back for a third year!

Greg also guested on Good Day Milwaukee, AM 920 WOKY, on the 15th December, where he treated hosts Don Willis and Gregory Jon to the story behind the Clay Aiken duet with Bing. This story was again related, and the track played, on *The David Hendrickson Show* on Christmas Eve. A virtual reprise of the Bing and Bowie collaboration but too late for commercial release last Christmas. Greg was to advise the programmes' listeners that it would probably make it for the next. Clearly, Greg is doing a great job there in West Bend, which can't be that far from the shores of Lake Michigan.

BOB HOPE TRIBUTE

Christmas Day in the UK had a lot of entertainment nostalgia going for it, not the least of which was the Crosby connection in this tuneful and informative tribute to the 20th Century's most popular and successful comedian. *Saga Prime Time* digital radio, also available on Sky TV and on the Net through www.saga.co.uk/primetime, was the place to be tuned to for this factual yet affectionate documentary. That Bing

was so well represented is almost certainly due to the fact that the principle narrator was our very own **Malcolm Macfarlane**. Sixty minutes is ridiculously short to tell the story of a man who lived to be one hundred years old and was performing one way or another for seventy-five of them. Malcolm touched on every aspect of his life from his English origins, through the vaudeville stage and screen performances with particular attention being paid to the most successful film series until the Bond movies. Golf, especially with Bing and most of the American Presidents, and his well chronicled tours of every major theatre of war entertaining American troops were given much prominence, and it was surprising just how much the presenter, Richard Edwards, was able to include. Also featured in the programme were our much appreciated record producer **Ken Barnes**, Bob and Bing's biographer Charles Thompson and, erstwhile script writer to the great man himself, the recently deceased Bob Monkhouse. There were at least five Bing and Bob duets featured, as well as a couple of sketches from the pair of them; but the number I enjoyed the most was Bob's duet with Ms Adams of 'Let's Turn The Record To The Flip Side', a track amply illustrating Bob's very listenable, mid-range tenor voice which, along with his acting, dancing aptitude and ability to ad lib with the best of them made him the complete entertainer. He never did win an Oscar, but perhaps his Honorary Knighthood more than made up for that.

'THE MAN WHO WOULD BE BING'

The following day, Boxing Day for us Brits, Saga in the Midlands on 105.7 Fm, (a different station to the Prime Time version which carried the Bob Hope tribute - it can be heard through www.saga.co.uk/1057fm) came up with another winner, on this occasion the life and times of Michael Holliday. It's almost impossible to disassociate Michael from Bing and the tragedy of his relatively short career could well be that he was cursed rather than blessed with a singing voice so like that of his hero. Presented by Andy Marriott, who had our own **Ken Crossland** on hand (Ken had also written the programme), the tribute fleshed out much of the trials and tribulations of this apparently easy going personality who, like the proverbial swan, displayed a tranquil, relaxed public image when in fact beneath the surface, a disturbed mental turbulence muddied the waters of his mind. That it finally led to his early demise by an accidental, or otherwise, overdose is an outcome associated with more than one personality blighted by their own insecurity. Ken's biography, due out in April along with a representative CD, will provide a further, fascinating insight into the career of this amiable entertainer. How prophetic that his final recording, just one week before he died, was entitled 'My Last Date With You'.

'BING'S MY UNCLE'

A New Year's Day treat for Essex listeners to their own BBC radio station was a mid-day, hour long broadcast featuring **Howard Crosby** talking, and singing, about his famous uncle. Produced and presented by Oliver Rogers, who was responsible for last April's Crosby Centenary programme, Ollie first went over to RAF Ridgewell, near Halstead in Essex, where he looked around the remains of the T2 hangar. This was where Bing performed for the 381st Bomb Group of the USAAF which was stationed at Ridgewell when Bing was there on the 2nd September 1944. From newspaper cuttings pinned to the wall, showing Bing singing in front of a B17, and from eye witness accounts, Jim was able to describe the "wonderful occasion" when, with aircrew sitting on the wings of aircraft and hanging from the rafters, Bing came on to the made-up stage singing 'Swinging On A Star'. It was the station's most successful concert he added.

Bing at Ridgewell in 1944

Ollie met up with Howard Crosby to discuss his recorded album of Crosby classics and to find out not only how it came about but also to relate some remembrances of his association with his uncle. Howard explained that he became involved with the Gonzaga Centennial Tribute and, having previously recorded an album of religious songs, thought it would be a good idea to record an album featuring some of Bing's earlier tracks. A lady from Portland, Oregon, was able to supply the music from her collection of 4,000 song sheets and the musicians went to work to try and re-create as faithfully as possible the original backing to such hits as 'Just One More Chance'; 'It Must Be True' and 'I Apologise'. About the age of fourteen years, some time in the 'Sixties, Howard thought Roy Orbison was the greatest singer the world had even known until one day, in a record store, he chanced upon one of his relative's Early Thirties LPs. Intrigued, he bought it; and having played it through rapidly came to the conclusion that Orbison was not the proper holder of that accolade.

Howard went on to say that Bing was never one for self-promotion and found it a huge turn off when others

started to say how great he was. He feels that Frank Sinatra has benefited from much greater promotion by the Sinatra family, and the record companies, to the detriment of Bing whose 'tremendous treasure trove' of recordings has not been similarly exploited.

Ollie asked Howard how he heard of his uncle's passing. His reply was that he had just retrieved a letter from his mailbox and opened it to find a letter from Bing inviting him to the next Pebble Beach Tournament when, on approaching his doorstep, he saw the newspaper lying there with the headlines of Bing's death.

A few Bing tracks were played during the course of this highly original programme, and these were interspersed with some of Howard's own recordings as featured on his CD *Pennies From Heaven*. This album was offered as a prize during the broadcast for the listener who could correctly answer in which year Bing had a hit with that title tune. Oliver Rogers, who is in his mid-twenties, goes from strength to strength!

COME SHARE THE WINE

On the 2nd January this year **Clare Holden**, who is a BBC Radio2 presenter's assistant, herself presented "A programme celebrating the life and music of Bing Crosby", in recognition of his Centenary, on BBC Radio Northampton. This one hour tribute took the form of remarkably enlightened look at the professional career of "The most successful and influential popular performer of the first half of the 20th Century". Ms Holden's near rapturous presentation of remarkable facts suggested that she was quite clearly intent on hitting home to her listeners the Crosby catalogue of achievements. Her approach was refreshingly devoid of domestic and private problems and only the merest suggestion of youthful peccadilloes were touched upon, such as a brief interpolation from Al Rinker regarding the reason surrounding Bing's loss of the "Song Of The Dawn" number in KING OF JAZZ. Around twenty vintage songs were featured, including a handful from the classic years of the 'Thirties, plus a couple of numbers from Al Jolson and Rinker's sister, Mildred. I have to say that any 'local' presentation that can include substantial references to Bailey's Music Shop, Bing's Musicaladers years and his classical education indicates that a lot of homework was undertaken for this programme. Perhaps the following quote indicates the source: "A Man who started out with a pocketful of dreams and ended up swinging on a star". Gary Giddins, are you reading this? However, it is a great pity that her intelligent and remarkably accurate biography was limited to such a relatively small catchment area.

'THE VOICE'

January 18 saw a further episode of a UK TV series tracing male, vocal influences. This part covered the 20th Century's popular music singers beginning, in the late 19th Century, with Enrico Caruso, the greatest lyric tenor of his time. Al Jolson's significance was acknowledged before turning to the age of the microphone and Bing. Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and others followed and were given their due consideration. Thereafter, the later development of the rock era and soul music, supplanted what, until then, had been a programme worthy of our attention. That's just a personal opinion, though, 'cos I know it's not the ICC's policy to knock other people's music!

IT'S WITHIN YOUR POWER

A suitable song title to suggest that some of what we hear and see is down to us. Okay, so it doesn't always work, but there's an awful lot of Bing featured over the UK airwaves which just wouldn't happen without the practical enthusiasm of many of our members. Some typical examples follow.

Like old man river the Likely Lads, **Arthur Blood** and **Maurice Beardmore** just keep rolling along and we are grateful to them for their continuous promotion of Der Bingle on BBC Radio Derby. A CD was received by me featuring all their appearances and requests over their local airwaves from April till December 2003, and a pretty varied bunch of tracks it contains. To say nothing of the fact that Arthur Blood was interviewed in his very own Bing room where he proudly drew attention to a tie worn by Bing in the 1956 version of ANYTHING GOES. Maurice Beardmore had the rare 'Get Yourself A Phonograph' soundtrack number, a cutting room floor casualty from the film EMPEROR WALTZ, played on Mike Carey's Saturday Show, and with Bing's 'Come Share The Wine' causing feminine hearts to flutter up there in the East Midlands, it can be appreciated that these are two very dedicated and modest guys who deserve recognition.

Think of the West Country and when it comes to Bing you think **Maggie Ryan**: same sentiments. This time around though she has to relate that, sadly, after seven years, one of Bing's foremost promoters, **Chris Robinson**, has got the push from BBC Radio South & West. His *Sunday Late Show* has been a great favourite and to axe it is inexcusable. Chris has always been very generous with his musical Crosbyana playing anything from 'Happy Feet' right through to Bing's final years on the Ken Barnes albums. As he was to say on one of his programmes 'Bing had a song for every occasion.' Many of the tracks Chris used as clues to his regular Mystery Year quiz, which might even tax some readers of these pages. For example, and off the top of your head, what year did Bing record 'The House Jack Built For Jill'? Among the last Crosby recordings featured were 'Down By The River'; 'Brother, Can You Spare A Dime' and 'Sweet Sue'. He closed the final programme first with Bing's 'I'll Be Seeing You' and, finally, with Al Bowlly's haunting version of 'Goodnight, Sweetheart'. If you live down that way and you miss Chris – tell 'em!

You've all seen those two drama masks that represent both tragedy and comedy; the previous paragraph would qualify for the former, but now we have the smiling face of the latter with the news that **David Lowe** is still in the driving seat, also BBC Radio South & West, hosting *As Time Goes By*; his regular Sunday dedications programme. David usually ties these tracks in with a tribute, usually for a birthday anniversary of the artiste featured. One such was Hoagy Carmichael's 104th birthday. This prompted the rarer, solo version from Bing of 'Small Fry', from a post D-day V Disc. With accompaniment by Tommy Dorsey this may not be so appealing as the commercial

recording that featured Victor Young's Small Fryers and Johnny Mercer, but Bing gives it his best shot with some morale boosting dialogue intended to lift the spirits of G.I.'s securing beachheads all along the Normandy coastline. Bing had a second bite of the Carmichael cake with 'Skylark', the birthday boy's collaboration with the aforementioned Johnny Mercer. There's just a hint of Hoagy's 'Star Dust' about this number and of all the participants, including John Scott Trotter, I believe the composer came out the best on this recording.

The same station features **Keith Fordyce**, and one of the recordings he played was 'Let Me Whisper I Love You'. It has always struck me how similar the introduction is to 'Poinciana'. Although five years separate these two numbers it can catch you out as to which Bing is about to sing. The only two tracks on which this occurs - unless you think differently! I've always enjoyed the cassettes I've been sent of Keith's programme for he is definitely a 'Thirties man, and a real bonus is his back-to-back Crosbyana. It would be difficult to beat hearing the likes of 'Lovely Lady' and 'Two For Tonight' wafting out over the airwaves quite uninterrupted.

To many, Stan the Man may well conjure up the sound of Peanut Vendor and other Kenton classics, but within the ICC it can only refer to our own **Stan White**, a stalwart of staggering proportions. I don't want to embarrass anyone here nor slight any of the great many others who do so much to promote the Crosby cause. But you've got to hand it to Stan, who must spend most of his waking hours living, breathing and recording Bing! Without the likes of Stan, Maggie, Arthur and our Stateside friends, who also send tapes, this column would be scarcely more than a paragraph.

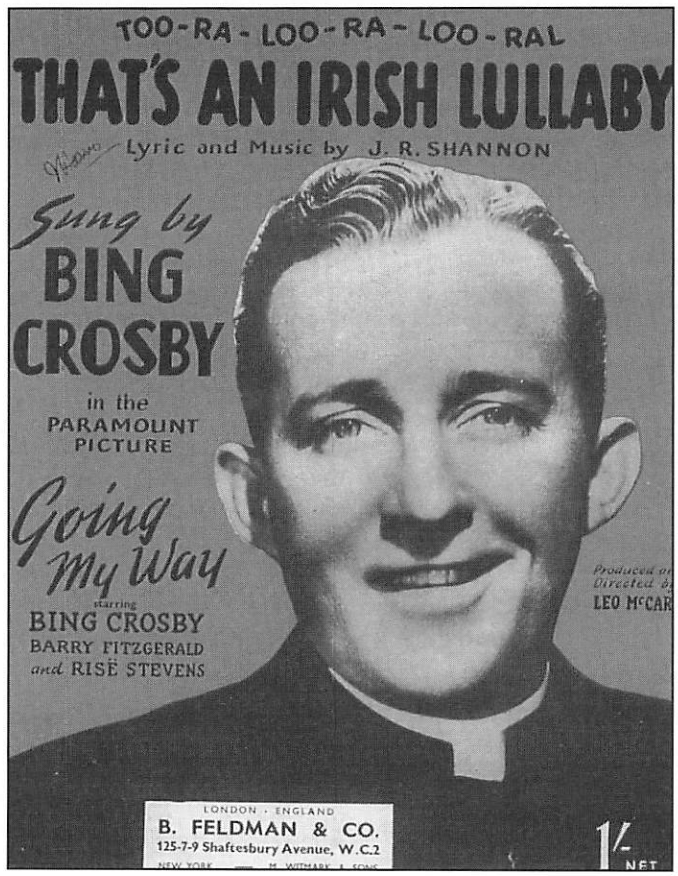
"CHANGES"

One of **Paul Barnes'** favourite, and frequently played, Whiteman – Crosby tracks is the title tune heading this section. It's been chosen to advise readers of the recent change to the broadcasting times of Barnsey At The Beeb's *Gold For Grown Ups* programme. It now runs uninterrupted for three hours from 9 pm to midnight every Sunday evening and can be readily received on BBC local radio stations Norfolk, Northampton, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Essex and the amalgamated Three Counties stations of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire; all of which represents one quarter of England! Not quite a national network but a huge chunk of the country nonetheless. Bing gets a fair crack of the whip in this mainly jazz orientated feast of musical entertainment. Bing, Satchmo and Ella with 'Memphis Blues' from the November 1951 Chesterfield Show, or Bing with Connee Boswell to brother Bob Crosby's accompaniment of 'Yes Indeed!' are typical examples. The Crosby Calendar, too, is a regular feature as the months slip by and the ICC's chosen photos are described and selected recordings played. Paul also used the occasion to feature three Bing sound-a-likes, Dick Todd, Charley Palloy and Michael Holliday; the latter especially to advise listeners of Ken Crossland's forthcoming biography of Michael. Even if you live beyond the *Gold For Grown Ups* official catchment area you may still be able to pick up this enjoyable and intelligent programme; which may well be your radio highlight of the week, even if it means diving under the duvet for the final hour!

AROUND THE WORLD

From Ireland, **Eddie Murphy's** Shannonside Northern Sound Radio programme on a Sunday night, *Sounds Nice*, always features a two-track Crosby Corner which Eddie tells us is continuing to prove very popular. However, to mark the 26th Anniversary of Bing's death he had an extended tribute during which he played:

'You're Just In Love' the wireless version with Judy Garland; 'At Last'; 'Walking The Floor Over You'; 'When My Dreamboat Comes Home'; 'Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Ral' and 'Dear Hearts And Gentle People'.



From our American friend, **Sandy Ghosh**, came news of a splendid Christmas night hour long TV programme on the history of the song 'White Christmas' with a lot of film clips of Bing interspersed throughout the show. This was accompanied by an excellent commentary provided by such people as Gary Giddins and Jody Rosen [who wrote the book about the song] as to how Bing is historically tied to the ultimate success of the song and what it meant, and continues to mean, to our culture. The programme went out on the ABC network. "A great show!", said Sandy, who asked if any other ICC members saw it.

In a postscript to this event, **Greg Van Beek** said he hadn't seen it but on 23rd December, after a commercial break, NBC came back with just their 'Today Show' logo and Bing's image filling the screen performing 'White Christmas' (from the top), courtesy of that classic scene by the fire in HOLIDAY INN. Midway

through the song announcer, Katie Couric, in a voice over, said: "Sing it Bing! My executive producer is telling me we can't let this play through to the end, but it seems sacrilegious to interrupt Bing Crosby singing White Christmas!" So thanks to Katie being a fan, and intervening, they left the scene play through until just before Bing begins coaching the words to Marjorie Reynolds. A nice touch thought Greg.

Ron Cannatella, via the Crosby Internet Museum, writes:

"Last night I watched an HBO documentary on the first Superbowl in 1967. The show focused on the Green Bay Packers, Coach Vince Lombardi and the Kansas City Chiefs and Coach Hank Stram. A brief color clip from a 1967 Hollywood Palace episode was shown during the program. Bing and Bob Hope joked about which team they wanted to win the Superbowl. Bing chose the Green Bay Packers and they won! It was great to see Bing included in the show."

While from **Steven Lewis**, a November posting read:

"Bing's 1967 guest shot on the Jackie Gleason Show (as part of a Honeymooners skit) will be broadcast on the Goodlife cable TV channel next weekend (Nov. 22-23). How sweet it is."

And Steven followed this up with the following on January 30.

"If you can tear yourself away from the Bing-bashing Fox News Channel for a few moments this evening (Wednesday) those flaming liberals at PBS will be airing Paul Taylor's dance routine to Bing's 'Brother, Can You Spare a Dime'. The show is called 'Dance in America' and airs at 9 p.m. Central time."

I must say Steven sounds quite upset about something!

Carrie Fisher, daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, has been hosting a series called *The Homes That Made Hollywood* on the Home & Garden TV channel in the USA celebrating homes of popular film stars of the 1940s and Bing's home was featured in Part 2 - THE '40's on 1st January. No further information I'm afraid.

From our antipodean friends comes the news that on Saturday 24th January, the Australian ABC TV channel featured LIVING FAMOUSLY – BING CROSBY exactly a year after its first screening on the UK's BBC 2. A review of this enlightening programme can be found in BING No. 133.

Judy Schmid informs us that on Thursday, 18 December - approximately 8:55pm EST there was a short retrospective of Bing on the radio – which was a repeat of an amalgam of Bing-spots that was put together this year by the team at WRVO-FM radio, a local NPR affiliate. Immediately after the tribute there was a repeat of an earlier tribute to Bob Hope.

Among the films and other Bing orientated programmes shown on US TV since our last issue, some of which were shown on more than one channel, are included the following:

Alias Jesse James	Flix Showtime
America in the Forties	PBS
Bob Hope: The Road to Laughter	PBS
High Time	AMC
Holiday Inn	Turner Classic Movies
Just for You	HBO Cinemax
Let's Make Love	AMC
My Favorite Brunette	GTV
Profiles - Bing Crosby	Bravo
Say One for Me	Fox Movie Channel
The Bells of St. Mary's	Turner Classic Movies
The Road to Hong Kong	Turner Classic Movies
White Christmas	WOR

Crosby movies in the UK have been conspicuous by their absence with only BBC2 managing its annual screening of WHITE CHRISTMAS on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, SKY TV giving us HOLIDAY INN on Christmas Day morning and ANYTHING GOES (1956) twice in February. True we did have THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT and LET'S MAKE LOVE too but they hardly qualify.

But of course Desmond Carrington, Russell Davies and David Jacobs, among others, on the national network have played his records continuously - as have many other, local, presenters – particularly tracks with a seasonal theme. To be fair there's been quite a lot of Bing out there to enjoy since this column last appeared; but we never seem to get enough, do we!

Bert Bishop February 2004

(Editor: Bert makes a good point there. Twenty years ago, we saw only one or two Bing films on TV each year and now we have a regular flow of them but we're still not satisfied. Perhaps if they wheel out 'Here Is Your Heart' we'll leave them in peace for a while!)

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Billy May, the bandleader, composer and arranger with a highly distinctive style who worked with Bing, Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee, died of a heart attack on January 22 at his home in San Juan Capistrano. He was 87.

Pittsburgh-born Billy May began his career as a trumpeter with the Charlie Barnet Band in 1938. He soon was contributing arrangements, the best-known of which for Barnet was for the hit recording of "Cherokee," the Ray Noble song that became a standard of the swing era and Barnet's signature tune. In 1939, May joined the Glenn Miller band, where his arrangements included "Take the 'A' Train" and "Serenade in Blue." With Miller, he was perhaps best-known for his trumpet playing, notably on "American Patrol" in 1942. May attempted to enlist for military service but failed the medical and he went on to write arrangements for the Les Brown, Woody Herman and Alvino Rey orchestras and work in studios and for NBC.

During the late 40s, he wrote arrangements for John Scott Trotter for use on Bing's radio show. By the early 50s, he was leading his own band, enjoying successes with his arrangements of "All of Me," "Lulu's Back in Town," "Charmaine," "When My Sugar Walks Down the Street," and "Lean Baby" amongst others. Unfortunately touring with his band led to the breakdown of his first marriage and he started

drinking heavily. He broke up his band and sold the name to fellow bandleader Ray Anthony. May continued to record for Capitol however and this led him into his long term association with Frank Sinatra, their first album being 'Come Fly With Me' in 1958. It wasn't surprising that when Frank Sinatra left the Capitol record company to start his own label, Reprise, he persuaded Billy May to defect with him to become his resident bandleader. He and the singer remained good friends until May's last album for him, "Trilogy" (1979).

He wrote music for innumerable films and television productions and accompanied every one of Capitol's stars from Frank Sinatra to Nat "King" Cole, from George Shearing to Peggy Lee. The albums he made with Bing were "Fancy Meeting You Here" (1958), "El Senor Bing" (1960), "Bing & Louis" (1960) and "That Travellin' Two Beat" (1964). His television work included composing, with Milton Raskin, the theme song for "Naked City," the popular ABC police drama that aired from 1958 to 1963. Billy May continued to work until 1996, latterly able to pick and choose the work that he took on. He was twice married and he had four daughters.

Ellen Drew passed away on 3 December, 2003 in Palm Desert, California, aged 88. Born Esther Loretta Ray in Kansas City in 1915, she graduated from working in a Hollywood Boulevard ice cream parlour to appearing in many movies opposite some of the biggest stars of her day. Hired as a $50-a-week contract player at Paramount Studios, she appeared in bit parts in several movies until her breakthrough in 1938 opposite Bing in *Sing You Sinners*. For this film, she changed her name from Terry Ray, and she went on to appear in scores of pictures opposite stars such as Jack Benny, Rudy Vallee, Dick Powell and Joel McCrea.

Ellen Drew gets to know Bing in Sing You Sinners

Her film credits included *If I Were King* (1938), written by Preston Sturges; *Christmas in July* (1940), a Sturges comedy in which she played opposite Dick Powell; *Buck Benny Rides Again* (1940), in which she was the straight woman to Jack Benny; and *Reaching for the Sun* (1941), opposite McCrea. Her films in the early 1950s included *Man in the Saddle*, opposite Randolph Scott; *The Baron of Arizona*, with Vincent Price; *Davy Crockett, Indian Scout*, with George Montgomery; and *The Great Missouri Raid*. Her last feature film was *Outlaw's Son* (1957). Drew also appeared in a number of television programmes in the United States, including Ford Television Theater and Perry Mason. Married and divorced several times, she is survived by her son and several grandchildren. Her second husband was Sy Bartlett who wrote the story on which *Road To Zanzibar* was based as well as many other screenplays and stories. Her other connections with Bing other than *Sing You Sinners* were uncredited parts in *Rhythm On the Range* (1936) and *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) plus an appearance with him on the *Kraft Music Hall* of February 23, 1939.

Richard Thomas Goldhahn, a singing cowboy with the stage name "Dick Thomas" who wrote "Sioux City Sue," a western anthem popularized by Bing and by Gene Autry in a movie of the same title, has died. He was 88. A favorite among fans of the singing-cowboy genre, "Sioux City Sue" began with these lyrics: "Sioux City Sue, Sioux City Sue. Your hair is red, your eyes are blue, I'd swap my horse and dog for you." Goldhahn co-wrote the lyrics with Max C. Freedman and composed the music for the catchy tune in 1945. His own recording of the song sold more than 150,000 copies. When Bing recorded it in December 1945, the song made the Lucky Strike Hit Parade for 14 consecutive weeks. The same year, Autry recorded "Sioux City Sue" as the title song of his Western film, solidifying the tune's place in western music history. Willie Nelson later recorded a version. Among Goldhahn's other songs were "The Beaut From Butte," "Esmereldy," "Weary Nights and Broken Dreams," "Give Me Back My Heart" and "I've Got a Gal in Laramie."

Art Carney died on November 9 in Connecticut at the age of 85. The comedic actor found his way into American hearts playing Ed Norton, Ralph Kramden's bowling buddy and not-too-bright upstairs neighbour on "The Honeymooners." With his turned-up porkpie hat and unbuttoned vest, Carney's Norton was known for his exuberant saying: "Hey, Ralphie boy!" Ralph Kramden was, of course, played by the late Jackie Gleason. Carney won three Emmys for his role and went on to win a best actor Oscar for "Harry and Tonto" in 1974. Bing worked with Art Carney on a 1969 Jackie Gleason Show for CBS called "The Honeymooners In Hollywood" when they sang "You Gotta Be You" with Gleason.

Les Tremayne left us on December 19, 2003. He was 90. Born in London, he moved to America in his early teens and went on the stage in the early 1930s. His distinguished demeanor and mellifluous voice was ideally suited to the theatre and to radio. He came to prominence appearing in literally thousands of "Golden Age" broadcasts, notably as star of the long-running anthology *The First Nighter*. In films from 1951, Tremayne brought a large dose of sober credibility to many an otherwise hard-to-swallow science fiction opus. At his best as General Mann in *The War of the Worlds* (1953), Tremayne was also successful in maintaining his dignity in cheapies of the *Angry Red Planet* (1959) and *Slime People* (1965) variety. In addition, Tremayne showed up in several non-genre efforts, usually in small but substantial roles like the auctioneer in *North by North West*. He came across Bing

in the 1959 film *Say One For Me* when he played "Harry LaMaise", the ailing father of Debbie Reynolds' character 'Holly'. Busiest on television as a commercial spokesman and voiceover artist, Tremayne found time to appear on the prime-time TV version of radio's *One Man's Family* (1951); as Inspector Richard Queen on the 1958-59 incarnation of the venerable *Ellery Queen*; and as 'Mentor' on the Saturday morning Captain Marvel-inspired weekly *Shazam!* (1974-77). In 1995, he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame during a broadcast ceremony from Chicago's Museum of Broadcasting.

Bing was a Yorkshireman!

Much is made of Bing's Irish connection which arises from his mother's side. Bing's great-grandfather was actually born in Ireland. However little has been made of Bing's father's ancestry. It was our member Norman Carter who alerted me to the family tree set out on the site of the Church of the Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. The Church has made a point of recording details from old parish records all over the world for genealogical purposes and anyone can access the records over the Internet. The information recorded by the Church is not guaranteed as the old parish records are hazy in parts but it is possible to trace Bing's family on his father's side back to a John Crosby (1440–1502) who was born, lived and died at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, near York in England.

We have read that the name "Crosby" is Danish in origin and means "Town of the Cross." *Cros* is a transposition of the Danish *kors* and *by* is a diminutive of the Danish *burg*. It is likely therefore that the earliest ancestors of Bing Crosby were Vikings who migrated to Ireland, Scotland, and Northern England (including Yorkshire), although this cannot be verified.

Bing's line appears to trace through:

1. **John Crosby** (1440–1502). Born at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, near York in England. Some researchers say that he was born at Stillingfleet, south of York but it appears that this was where he was buried. From his will, it appears that he had a substantial estate.
2. **Miles Crosby** (born in 1483) also in Holme-on-Spalding-Moor.
3. **Thomas Crosby** (1501–1558). Another who was born and died at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor.
4. **Anthony Crosby** (1545–1598). Again, a resident of Holme-on-Spalding-Moor.
5. **Thomas Crosby** (1575–1661). Born at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor but died in Rowley, Essex, Massachusetts having emigrated there with his son, Simon.
6. **Simon Crosby** (1608–1639), born at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. It seems that he was a Puritan who fled England with his family to escape religious persecution and who arrived in Boston cradling his five-month-old son, Thomas, in his arms.
7. **Thomas Crosby** (1635–1702) became a minister in Eastham, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and had twelve children including a son named Simon.
8. The said **Simon** (1665–1718) became a merchant and he had fourteen children, including a son named Nathaniel.
9. **Nathaniel Crosby** (born 1695 in Harwich, Barnstable, Massachusetts - died in 1780) went on to have seven children of his own including another Nathaniel.
10. This **Nathaniel** (1733–1827) also had a son called **Nathaniel** (1782–1867) and in turn his son, yet again a Nathaniel, who was born in Brewster, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, became a swashbuckling sea captain.
11. **Captain Nathaniel Crosby, Jr.**, (1810–1856) married Mary Lincoln and influenced his family to move to Portland, Oregon, in 1850 where he set up a lumber shipping business. The family moved to Tumwater, near what is now Olympia, Washington, where they bought a general store and purchased the grist mill. Captain Nathaniel however died in Hong Kong where he had been running a ship chandler's business. He is buried in the Colonial Cemetery, Happy Valley, Hong Kong. After his death, his widow and son returned to Tumwater.
12. The Captain's son, inevitably another **Nathaniel** (1837–1885), lost money in a steamship business and finished up as the postmaster in Olympia. He and his wife, Cordelia Jane Smith, had two children, one called Frank Lawrence Crosby, and another named **Harry Lowe** (sometimes Harry Lincoln, after his grandmother) **Crosby** who was born on November 28, 1870, and went on to marry a certain Catherine Helen Harrigan.
13. **Harry Lowe Crosby and Catherine Helen Harrigan** had seven children including **Harry Lillis Crosby**, born May 3, 1903.

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Yorkshiremen have a reputation for being proud, blunt and direct in their approach and careful with their money. The old joke is that the definition of a Yorkshireman is "a Scotsman, but without the generous nature." I'm sure Michael Crampton and Ken Crossland (Yorkshiremen through and through) will object and I suspect that we may not have heard the last about Bing's Yorkshire roots.

Bing in Syracuse, New York

The unstoppable Judy Schmid was busy again in December as you will read.

As Bing's centennial year winds to a close, I had a middle-of-the-night epiphany recently and telephoned our local county library as soon as they opened.

"Do you accept donations of books from average citizens?" I asked.

"Sure, we do - we love it - as long as the subject matter is appropriate for the community - what do you have in mind?" they answered.

"Bing," I responded.

"As in Crosby?" they chuckled.

"Yes - I've spent much of this past year working with other Bing-fans and volunteers in promoting Bing in this anniversary year of his birth, and some of us feel that education is key to Bing's music and art being once again in the public eye."

I then went on to talk about the Hofstra and Gonzaga events that I attended, and about Mrs Crosby's new book and my involvement in a 9-day book tour across New

York State.

"Y'know, I bet we could even do a display on Bing - if I donate books, I could also loan you memorabilia I've been collecting since I was a little girl."

A few days later, I brought over copies of Mrs C's new book, the Grudens book, Malcolm's book, and Ken Barnes' book - and a sampling of my 'Bing-things'.

The librarian chuckled and said "if more people in the community would do this sort of thing for their hobby, we'd have a lot of fun!"

I mentioned that in high school, rather than take a lunch break or a study hall, I'd work in the library, cataloging (and reading!) new books, and decorating displays for themes or holidays.

The display is now set up in the Onondaga County Library's Downtown Syracuse branch. The main branch serves a population of just under 500,000 - so it'll be seen by many eyes this holiday season. The library staff, a day behind in setting up the books, films, and music they had of Bing's (two books were definitely left out the display - they're still in circulation, but they're not included here - and we know what two books those are!). They'll add my contributions today along with some decorative snowflakes dangling from the ceiling panels. They've asked me if it could stay until the end of January rather than the end of December.

Sure! Happy birthday, Bing!

For those of you with collections who haven't been featured in your local libraries or newspapers, now's the perfect time to work on educating the public! All it took was a telephone call or two, a bit of generosity of time and materials - and so much fun! As I was setting up, people were watching me and commenting on things they remembered from their youth - and how much they missed Bing! In the USA, contributions made to libraries are tax deductable.

Judy Schmid - December 5, 2003

Keeping Track

Ken Crossland looks at what's new.

A warm welcome to another canter through the new releases - CDs, DVDs etc. - and a glance at the newest piece of technology that's just around the corner. I've always believed that the day would come when you could get your entire Bing collection on a single disc. Pie in the sky? It's nearer than you think. But first, the "old" format - CDs!

COMPACT DISCS

First up, it's great to welcome the two latest "Chronologicals".

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 34 **JZCD34** **£10** **UK**

1. My Great, Great Grandfather * 2. A Boy In Khaki, A Girl In Lace * 3. Moonlight Becomes You 4. Constantly 5. By The Light Of The Silvery Moon * 6. But Not For Me (A) * 7. But Not For Me (B) 8. Hello Mom (L3089A) 9. Hello Mom (De 4367) * 10. Sunday, Monday Or Always 11. If You Please 12. Mississippi Mud / I Left My Sugar Standing In The Rain (Rhythm Boys reunion) 13. People Will Say We're In Love (with Trudy Erwin) 14. Oh! What a Beautiful Morning (with Trudy Erwin) 15. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) 16. Vict'ry Polka (A) * (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. Vict'ry Polka (B) (with the Andrews Sisters) 18. Jingle Bells (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 19. Jingle Bells (fluff) (with the Andrews Sisters) 20. Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town (with the Andrews Sisters) 21. Poinciana (A) 22. Poinciana (B) * 23. I'll Be Home For Christmas

* = new to CD

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 35 **JZCD35** **£10** **UK**

1. It Could Happen To You 2. September Song (A) 3. San Fernando Valley 4. Swinging On A Star 5. The Day After Forever (A) 6. Going My Way 7. I Love You (Porter) 8. I'll Be Seeing You (L3315-A) 9. Night And Day 10. Amor 11. I'll Be Seeing You (L3318-A) 12. One Sweet Letter From You 13. On The Atchison, Topeka And The Santa Fe 14. Long Ago (And Far Away) 15. Like Someone In Love (A) 16. Like Someone In Love (fluff) * 17. Begin The Beguine 18. Dearly Beloved 19. (There'll Be A) Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin (with the Andrews Sisters) 20. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby)? (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 21. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby)? (B) * (with the Andrews Sisters) 22. I'll Remember April * 23. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Lo-Ral (L3456-A) 24. Moonlight On A White Picket Fence

* = new to CD

I've commented before that this admirable series faces greater competition as it moves into Bing's heartland years of the mid-Forties, but for me at least, it's just great to have everything to hand in strict date order, as well, of course, as gaining access to those rare gems of fluffs and alternate takes that give the series its distinctive character. Incidentally, our esteemed Editor tells me that he is certain that the fluff of 'Like Someone In Love' (16 above) is from the Kraft Music Hall broadcast of April 19, 1945 and is not a commercial recording. Highly recommended issues and as ever, available in the UK & Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD, UK. Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records.

Bing Crosby: Centennial Collection **Acrobat ADDCD 3002** **£8.99** **UK**

CD1: 1. Can't We Talk It Over? 2. Snuggled On Your Shoulder 3. Shine (with the Mills Brothers) 4. Waltzing In A Dream 5. Lazy Day 6. Love Me Tonight 7. Some Of These Days 8. Street Of Dreams 9. Young And Healthy 10. You've Got Me Crying Again 11. Blue Prelude 12. I've Got To Sing A Torch Song 13. Home On The Range (1933) 14. My Love 15. Give Me A Heart To Sing To 16. Red Sails In The Sunset 17. I'm An Old Cowhand 18. Too Marvellous For Words 19. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams 20. What's New? 21. Only Forever 22. You Are My Sunshine 23. Moonlight Becomes You 24. Sunday Monday or Always 25. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters)

CD2: 1. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) 2. It's Been A Long Long Time 3. White Christmas 4. Silent Night 5. Now Is The Hour 6. Faraway Places 7. Galway Bay 8. Riders In The Sky 9. Some Enchanted Evening 10. Bali Ha'i 11. Dear Hearts And Gentle People 12. Mule Train 13. Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy 14. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You? (with the Andrews Sisters) 15. Quicksilver (with the Andrews Sisters) 16. Play A Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 17. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 18. A Marshmallow World 19. When You And I Were Young Maggie Blues (with Gary Crosby) 20. Sparrow In The Treetop (with the Andrews Sisters) 21. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 22. In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 23. Zing A Little Zong (with Jane Wyman) 24. Silver Bells (with Carole Richards) 25. The Isle Of Innisfree

This UK release offers as good a meander through Bing's career as you will find. The price that the collector pays of course is that most of the tracks will exist umpteen times on other CDs but the odd oddity creeps in - "Isle Of Innisfree" being the song that leaps out as not appearing much elsewhere, although it was on one of the Irish compilations.

The Far East has been a rich source of new material these past few months. First up is a title that rings a bell from an MCA release of a few years back, but is in fact a new compilation.

Bing Crosby with Jazz Friends
Universal UCCC-3032 **$23** **Japan**

1. Someday Sweetheart 2. Takes Two To Make A Bargain 3. Ciribiribin (with the Andrews Sisters) 4. You Made Me Love You (with the Merry Macs) 5. Yes, Indeed! (with Connie Boswell) 6. Birth Of Blues 7. I Ain't Got Nobody 8. My Baby Said Yes (with Louis Jordan) 9. It's Been A Long Long Time 10. I've Found A New Baby 11. Day By Day 12. Blue 13. After You've Gone 14. Personality 15. Pinetop's Boogie Woogie 16. On The Sunny Side Of The Street 17. Be-Bop Spoken Here (with Patty Andrews) 18. Then You've Never Been Blue * 19. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 20. I've Got To Fall In Love Again * 21. Watermelon Weather (with Peggy Lee) 22. All She'd Say Was Umh Hum * 23. Ol' Man River 24. Swanee 25. The Song Is You

* = new to CD

This is an interesting array of titles but what lets the CD down is the apparent absence of any sound restoration on some of the masters that sound as they have come from 78s that have been found lying around in a junk store. A shame because with good sound, it would be a terrific set.

Also from Japan, another new compilation albeit with a most unoriginal title.

The Very Best of Bing Crosby **Universal** **UCCC-3031** **$23** **Japan**

1. Where The Blue Of The Night 2. Stardust 3. Pennies From Heaven 4. Sweet Leilani 5. What's New? 6. White Christmas 7. Road To Morocco 8. I'll Be Seeing You 9. Swinging On A Star 10. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 11. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 12. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (with Judy Garland) 13. You Belong To My Heart 14. I Can't Begin To Tell You 15. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 16. Now Is The Hour 17. Galway Bay 18. Dear Hearts And Gentle People 19. Play A Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 20. In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 21. Autumn Leaves 22. Hush-A-Bye 23. You're The Top (with Mitzi Gaynor) 24. Around The World 25. The Second Time Around

All largely familiar fare, with the exception of "Hush-A-Bye" and one therefore only for those who must have absolutely everything. Cheapest source for these Japanese items is via the internet at www.cdjapan.co.jp . *Interesting that the above set should include "You're The Top", which comes from Bing's 1956 remake movie "Anything Goes". That in turn provides perhaps the most surprising reissue this quarter.*

Anything Goes: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack **Decca Broadway B0001933-02** **$14.98** **USA**

Ya Gotta Give The People Hoke * (with Donald O'Connor) - You're The Top (with Mitzi Gaynor) - All Through The Night - A Second Hand Turban And A Crystal Ball * (with Donald O'Connor) - Blow Gabriel Blow * (with Donald O'Connor, Mitzi Gaynor & Jeanmaire) - Sailor Beware - My Heart And I - Moonburn (other items non-Bing)

* = new to CD

One can only guess that the recent revival of "Anything Goes" as a stage musical has prompted the re-appearance of what was originally a US Decca 12" LP from the late 50s. The Crosby content also of course appeared on the Bing's Hollywood

series. We might split hairs with the title in that two of Bing's tracks - the afore-mentioned "You're The Top" and "All Through The Night" are studio recordings rather than soundtrack versions. Also worthy of note is the inclusion of three tracks from Bing's first time around dalliance with "Anything Goes" in 1936. Liner notes are by the eminent jazz critic, Will Friedwald.

From member Frans van der Kolff comes news of an Italian release of multi-artiste V-disc material and although much of the non-Bing material might also be of interest, sadly we do not have space to list it all and only Bing's items are shown.

Le Voci Indimenticabili (5 volumes) Warner 857380144-2 / 857380145-2 / 857380146-2 / 857380147-2 / 857380734-2 each volume can be bought separately for EUR 12,99 per volume Italy
Volume 2: Medley from 'Waikiki Wedding'
Volume 4: A Friend of Yours - That Sly Old Gentleman - My Heart And I - Too Romantic - All You Want To Do Is Dance
Volume 5: It Can't Be Wrong

Still on the theme of Bing playing bit parts, here's an interesting release from one of Bing's KMH companions.

Marilyn Maxwell: Delightful Diva Collector's Choice WWCCM1052 $9.95 USA
This is what the Collector's Choice web site says about the release.
"Marilyn made her mark as a comely comic actress for MGM in films like 'Salute to the Marines', Swing Fever' and 'Summer Holiday', but she could carry a mean tune, too! These performances hail from her 1944 stint on Bing Crosby's Kraft Music Hall radio series, and feature Marilyn backed by Bing's longtime accompanists, the John Scott Trotter Orchestra. Utterly charming! Includes four duets with Bing himself, 'Easter Parade', 'Take It Easy', 'There's a Small Hotel', and 'Surrey with the Fringe on Top', plus 'Wish I May, Wish I Might', 'How Come You Do Me Like You Do?' 'Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?', 'Trolley Song', 'Tess' Torch Song', 'I Never Knew', 'Milkman Keep Those Bottles Quiet', and 'When They Ask About You'.
A glittering 'Collectors' Choice Music' exclusive!"

That's just about it in terms of material that's out there but, there are other good things not too far away. A very welcome email from Ken Barnes tells us that he has finally obtained clearance for the re-issue of the tracks from Bing's final album "Seasons" on CD. It's always been a curiosity that Bing's finest album - from a recording technology perspective - has never managed to claw its way on to a digital disc, but it seems that the wait will soon be over. Ken also has news that his compilation of some lesser heard tracks from Bing's early 50s radio days will also hit the shelves under the title of "Swingin' With Bing - The Lost Transcriptions". More of both of these next time, I hope.

DVD

Not a great deal new to report on the DVD front. I mentioned last time that Ken Barnes's release of "The Road Collection" was imminent and here's what our editor has to say about it.

Road To Singapore - Zanzibar - Morocco - Utopia (Box set) Universal 8212005 £31.67 UK - Region 2 encoding
"I have now received the box set and what a handsome addition to my collection it is! Nicely presented in innovative packaging for the four DVDs and all at a reasonable price. The films are given the distinctive Ken Barnes touch with moving menus (i.e. instead of stills illustrating the scene in question, there are moving pictures and sound instead), extensive production notes and comments on the main players by Ken himself. Excellent copies of the films are buttressed by the original theatre trailers, a photo gallery section for each film (many photos were supplied by our own Ron Bosley), the rare short film "Hollywood Victory Caravan" (Bing sings "We've Got Another Bond To Buy") plus a glimpse of Bing at the Stage Door Canteen in 1944. This latter item from a newsreel does not feature Bing singing as we had originally assumed but shows him talking to the audience. Another nice touch is the inclusion of exclusive artcards for each film showing the coloured advertising for the film on one side with details of the 'chapters' on the reverse. In short, this is a most attractive package which should

hopefully sell well to anyone interested in one of the most successful celluloid series ever."

From Bert Bishop comes news of two other releases.

The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow **Walt Disney's Fables 21 D888709** **£15.19 UK - Region 2 encoding**
This is an official Walt Disney release in a series called WALT DISNEY'S FABLES. DVD is labeled 'Volume One', with two stories on it, the other being 'The Prince And The Pauper', which is a Mickey and friends adaptation. Bing is not mentioned on the box anywhere. However, at the start of the film he is credited as the narrator. The dialogue is available in five languages but sadly not the songs (a comment that triggers an interesting thought! Just think what curiosities might have emerged had Bing followed the modern practice of recording hits and film songs in several languages!)

The Adventures Of Ichabod And Mr Toad **Walt Disney Home Video D888897 £18.99 UK - Region 2 encoding**
This DVD offers the complete film by Disney as originally released under the title of 'The Adventures Of Ichabod And Mr. Toad'. Among the several 'bonus' items is an Interactive Storybook: 'The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow, and Mr. Toad's Wild Ride Game'.

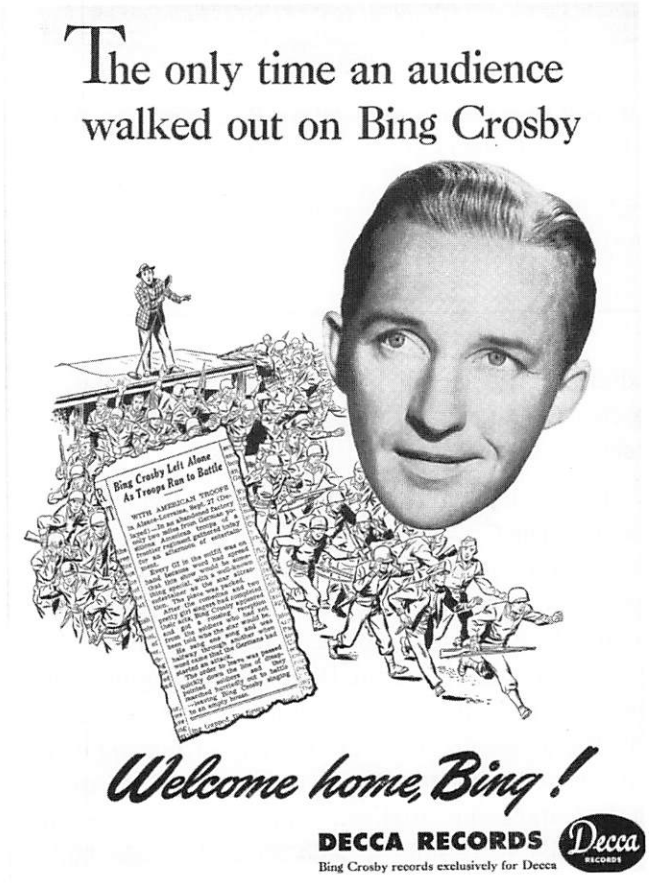
Les Wilson has spotted a rare Bing item.

The Andy Griffith Show **Raintree Home Video RHV 12086 $5.88 USA - Region 1 encoding**
"For the collector who must have everything Bing I came across a two disc DVD of *The Andy Griffith Show* (16 episodes) at Walmart that has bonus material, not only some classic cartoons but some commercials that includes one featuring Bing for 'Ducks Unlimited' which some of you may remember from an outdoor sports TV show. Check your Walmart."

And in our 'watch this space' category, look out for a double DVD of "Here Comes The Groom" and "Just For You", which is scheduled for a June release in the USA.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Shades of Glenn Miller! Let's start with the old, and our regular look at the world of the web. Here's an item which was offered on eBay which was new to me. It's a Decca Records ad from 1944, which according to the seller, appeared once only on 16 October 1944. The cutting that is reproduced on the ad tells an interesting story - which also appears in Malcolm's "Day By Day" and is thus seemingly true - as follows:


The only time an audience walked out on Bing Crosby
Bing Crosby Left Alone As Troops Run to Battle
Welcome home, Bing!
DECCA RECORDS
Bing Crosby records exclusively for Decca
Decca RECORDS

"SEPT 27TH, ALSACE-LORRAINE
Bing Crosby left alone as troops run to battle
In an abandoned factory only two miles from German positions, American troops of a frontier regiment gathered today for an afternoon of entertainment. Every GI in the outfit was on hand because word had spread that this show would be something special, with a well-known entertainer as the star attraction. The place was packed. After the comedian and two pretty girl singers had completed their acts, Bing Crosby appeared and got a rousing reception from the soldiers who had not been told who the star would be. He sang one song and was halfway through another when word came that the Germans had started an attack. The order to leave was passed quickly down the line of disappointed soldiers and they marched hurriedly out to battle - leaving Bing Crosby singing to an empty house."

Finally, I'm grateful to member Jon Oye for this little snippet.
I always enjoy checking out the items in your "What's On the Web" column in Bing magazine, and thought I'd respond to your request for unusual Bing things. I'm not sure how unusual it is, but I won this Del Mar token on eBay a few years ago for around $5 or so, as I recall. Since then I've seen maybe two come up for auction. It measures about 1 and 3/8" in diameter and is dated 1945. It's very lightweight, probably not metal (though it appears to be to the naked eye), since it was obviously produced during WWII. (see overleaf).

Now, the something new. Hands up if you own an iPod. No? How about hands up if you would know an iPod if you fell over one.

Still no? Well, someone who does is our member from Minnesota, Arne Fogel. I met Arne at the Hofstra event in 2002 and he's the sort of guy who you would always expect to latch onto something new. So, when this appeared from him on the Crosby Internet Museum in January, I for one, was not surprised.

"Let me tell you as one (like most of us) who has quite a number of treasured "Bing Crosby Brunswicks" carefully tucked away in my collection, there is absolutely NO ONE more dangerously cool and all-powerful than a Crosby Collector with an iPod! Are you kidding? These things were MADE for us. My 40-gig iPod has my entire collection of Bing CDs on it, plus Dean Martin's complete discography, complete Beatles, complete Reprise Sinatra, Complete Bix, Venuti & Lang, plenty of Billie, Peggy, Louis, Stones, Who, Beach Boys, Randy Newman, etc., etc. But first & foremost, Bing. Any Bing song that I have in my CD collection is at my fingertips. Don't be afraid of this technology. it's the greatest thing to come along for us archivists since the invention of the record shelf."

So what's an iPod? Well, it's a creation of the Apple Corporation and at one time, was limited in its use to those of us who also have Apple Mac computers. Now however, the technology is open to those of us who use the more common Windows based PCs. Here's how Apple describes their little treasure.

"The super-slim iPod defines what a digital music player should be. It's lighter than two CDs, can hold up to 10,000 songs, thousands of digital photos and works as a personal voice recorder. Now you can sync with iTunes for Mac and Windows at blazing speeds, and take your entire music collection with you wherever you go. Available for Mac and Windows starting at $299. 15GB, 20GB and 40GB Models**.** At just over half an inch thick, the iPod fits comfortably in the palm of your hand and slips easily into your pocket - and your life. Merely 5.6 ounces, it weighs less than two Compact Discs, and even many cell phones. And yet the iPod gives you a huge 15GB, 20GB or 40GB hard drive - big enough to hold 10,000 songs. Do the sums: that's four weeks of music - played continuously, 24/7 - or one new song a day for the next 27 years."

So there you are - and bearing in mind that Bing's recorded output was "only" 2000 or so songs, you could store the entire recorded output of Bing, Como, Sinatra and Dean Martin on just one disc. And they said it couldn't be done.

All for now. As ever, contributions always welcome to ken@kencrossland.co.uk or visit me at www.kencrossland.co.uk

Ken Crossland

(Editor: Many thanks to Ken for his usual comprehensive roundup. I shall have to save up to get an iPod. Mind you, there's a bit of fuss in the papers at the moment about the cost of replacing the inbuilt battery every 18 months or so. Perhaps I'll let them sort that out first.

As you will have read elsewhere, Ken's book "The Man Who Would Be Bing – The Life Story of Michael Holliday" is being published on 19 April and a 3CD set – provisionally titled "The Story Of My Life – The Michael Holliday Anthology" – will come out on the same date.)

Commercial Crosby (or not?)

The inclusion of an apparent 'B' take of 'Like Someone In Love' in *The Chronological Bing Crosby* volume 35 CD which Ken Crossland highlights has created some debate as it has transpired that the track was in fact a song from the Kraft Music Hall broadcast of April 19, 1945 which had been cleverly edited. The doctored version seemed to appear for the first time on one of the late John Joyce's LPs 'Through The Years - Volume 3' and investigations at the time pointed to the track being engineered by an Australian collector. Whether this was for fun, mischief or commercial gain is not known. Whilst it is a very pleasant track, it is not a genuine commercial recording and would not have been included in the excellent Jonzo series if its true pedigree had been appreciated. John McNicholas, who produces the Jonzo CDs, is no doubt furious about the deception.

The track even fooled Fred Reynolds who reviewed it in his "The Crosby Collection" series of books. In the actual radio broadcast, there is some laughter as the introduction to 'Like Someone In Love' is played and this has been cut and replaced with the intro from the commercial take 'A' before Bing's radio singing is used. Bing laughs in the first few lines, continuing the fun with the audience. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy for us to say that Bing would surely have stopped singing once he realised that he had spoiled a commercial recording at such an early stage but the whole track does sound genuine.

Another 'forgery' was a track purporting to be a rehearsal recording of the song 'Mandy' which has appeared on one or two limited edition LPs (including one in the previously mentioned John Joyce series). Soundtrack dialogue from Bing's film *If I Had My Way* was used to lead into a vocal track of 'Mandy' from a Philco show with more dialogue, this time from *The Country Girl,* rounding off the subterfuge. Again the culprit was suspected to be from Australia.

A slightly contentious commercial track was included on Jonzo 34 and this was the Rhythm Boys reunion. This reunion took place on a radio show "Paul Whiteman Presents" broadcast live on July 4, 1943 and a review in Variety at the time included the following:

> The first section offered a revival of the original Rhythm Boys; namely Bing Crosby, Al Rinker and Harry Barris and the ten minutes of raillery vocalizing and special business that ensued was a treat of uncommon dimensions. The trio's interpretation of "Mississippi Mud" would undoubtedly become a must for record collectors if it were recorded.

Well, in due course the trio's interpretation was indeed released on record, this being an LP called "Paul Whiteman's 50th Anniversary Record". The track includes dialogue before the Rhythm Boys start singing and on the radio show the part of a secretary is played by Dinah Shore. On the LP however, Dinah is replaced by an unknown actress because of contractual problems but to confuse us even more, the version on Jonzo 34 is from the original radio broadcast and does include Dinah Shore! The singing portion of the track was of course also included on the 4-CD set 'Bing - His Legendary Years'. John McNicholas does accept in his notes to the CD that this radio broadcast does not really qualify for the Jonzo series but states that it warranted inclusion as it appears in several discographies and has enjoyed several commercial reissues.

The Rhythm Boys reunion.

Most discographies of Bing's recordings are based on a premise of Bing having gone into a studio to record a song for commercial release but the edges of this definition became very blurred as Bing's career progressed and songs were picked up from various sources for commercial issue. Wig acknowledges this in his masterful *Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings* by having a separate section for 'Other Commercial Recordings' which lists these 'fringe' items, such as the Bing 'N' Bowie song from Bing's last TV show and the recordings issued using film soundtracks (e. g. 'High Society', 'Anything Goes', 'Say One For Me', 'Pepe').

By the early 1950s it became quite common for Bing's radio recordings to be mastered by Decca for commercial release. Usually discographies quote the Decca mastering date instead of the radio broadcast date although this is not always followed. Examples such as 'Nobody', recorded for radio on March 3, 1947, broadcast April 2, 1947 and mastered for issue on 78 on December 31, 1954 muddy the waters nicely to say the least. "What A Little Moonlight Can Do' (recorded for radio October 4, 1953, broadcast November 1, 1953) and 'Down By The Riverside' (recorded for radio September 15, 1953, broadcast October 4 same year) were both mastered by Decca on November 4, 1953 and there are other examples from the 1950s which make life difficult for the discographer. The whole of the *Some Fine Old Chestnuts* album was originally recorded for radio before being mastered for commercial release on June 26, 1953 and the same probably applies to the *New Tricks* album from 1957.

Then we come to those tracks made for radio with Buddy Cole which were re-mastered by Ken Barnes in the late 1970s. Not only was fresh accompaniment added but in at least one case ('Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland'), the track was extended by reprising Bing and Rosie Clooney's singing from the earlier chorus. In Bing's final years, Ken Barnes was able to put together a composite version of a song using bits from separate takes and 'Seasons' and 'Come Share The Wine' come to mind as examples of this procedure. There are even those who say that the version of 'Great Day' on the Palladium CD was taken from a commercial recording session the year before and inserted into the album to add interest. After all, we read earlier in this issue how it was planned to insert a short version of 'White Christmas' into Bing's medley at the Palladium.

The latest challenge to the collector is the CD issued last Christmas called *Christmas Remixed: Holiday Classics Regrooved* which contains two Bing songs 'Happy Holiday' and 'The First Noel' which have been remixed to create dance / hip hop type tracks! Do I hear you saying 'enough!'?

So if our discographers have problems, they deserve all the sympathy we can give them. And, at the end of the

day (a phrase everyone seems to use nowadays), I suppose most people don't care where it's come from and whether it's commercial or counterfeit as long as it's Bing singing.

Malcolm Macfarlane

(Note: Wig's discography is still available and see 'Trading Post' for details.)

Bing would have liked it, son says..

This headline referring to Bing's son, Harry, appeared above an article by Ed Vyeda in the Monterey Herald on February 6 which we reproduce with grateful thanks to the writer and his newspaper.

The special feeling never leaves, said Harry Crosby, when he comes back to the golf gathering his father started. And he is certain that if Bing Crosby were around today, that he would like what is going on with the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

"Absolutely, I think he would," Crosby said Thursday after the first round he has played in the tournament in four years.

"Dad took great care to create the right environment, with people who care about the community," said Crosby, whose 8 a.m. starting time was on the back side of Spyglass Hill Golf Course, far removed from the celebrity field up the road at Poppy Hills. "He was strict about the people who participate."

The tournament came to the Peninsula in 1947 as the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, the first on the PGA Tour to showcase pro golfers and celebrities together.

Crosby, 44, a managing director for Merrill Lynch in New York, said the evolution of the event — from paying the winner $40,000 in 1977, the year Bing Crosby died, to a $954,000 first prize this year — was inevitable.

"There was a time in the '70s that the Tour was organizing in a way like never before," Crosby said. "We needed a sponsor. The family couldn't underwrite it."

The backlash from the Crosby name being dropped from the tournament when AT&T became title sponsor in 1986 still rumbles round the Peninsula a bit. And for a time, the move to corporate sponsorship put a strain on the family.

"Change is always a little bit painful," Crosby said.

But he has been on board with the progression since 1986, and still is, as a member of the board of the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, which runs the AT&T Pro-Am.

Although Crosby has not played in the event recently — creating a void of the Crosby name in the event he and his younger brother, Nathaniel, have played in the past — he has been at most events, to attend Foundation meetings.

And while he hasn't played much golf lately — "It's a little hard when it's 20-below in New York" — Crosby still shot 79 on his own Thursday.

The trip back to the Peninsula is always special to Crosby, who was married last August. His wife, Mihaela, is a scientist from Croatia who is working in cancer research.

"It's always a little nostalgic to be here, but I like what Peter Ueberroth, Clint Eastwood and AT&T have done," Crosby said, noting two of the four principal owners of the Pebble Beach Co. Eastwood is also chairman of the Foundation board. "They have taken such pains to ensure the tradition is still there."

"It's about the people who participate," Crosby said. "They know that. They got it right."

Ed Vyeda

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

Palm Desert
March 12, 1958

Mr. Stan White
61 Stanley Street
Rothwell
Kettering, Northants, England

Dear Stan:

Thanks for your nice letter. I'm pleased to hear the good news about Michael Holliday. I hope that he continues to progress and becomes a big star. I'm sure all of you will be very happy if he does. Glad to hear too that some of my records have been moving satisfactorily in the British Isles.

Was talking to Gary on the phone the other day. He was speaking from Germany. He told me when he gets discharged in May that he's planning to play a few theatres in England, and it's quite likely that the Palladium will be one of such spots. I hope so, then you can get to see him and meet him while he's there.

If you send the Reginald Dixon recordings, the dual tape will be all right, as I now have a tape machine, and after a thorough schooling can almost make it work. If I fail, one of my neighbors can come in and help me.

Mrs. Crosby and I send best regards to all of you -

As ever,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

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